Mendelssohn

MASTER SERIES FOR THE YOUNG

Compositions for Piano in their Original Versions
Selected and Edited by

Edwin Hughes

- BACH
- BEETHOVEN
- SCHUMANN
- HANDEL
- SCHUBERT
- CHOPIN
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- TCHAIKOVSKY

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Each 75 cents (In U. S. A.)

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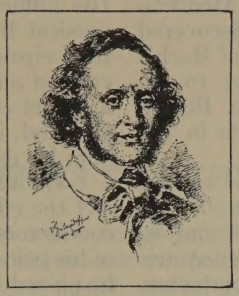
FELIX MENDELSSOHN-BARTHOLDY



The lives of so many great composers are one long record of struggle, poverty, and disappointment, that Felix Mendelssohn's career would be remarkable if for no other reason than the advantages, the affluence and the success which he enjoyed during his lifetime. His family was Jewish, and of humblest origin. His grandfather, the eminent philosopher Moses Mendelssohn, when young, had still to suffer under the humiliating restrictions which, until the end of the eighteenth century, actually segregated all Jews in the towns of Europe from the normal life of the community. This sage and emancipator gradually conquered the prejudices of the Christians and the bigotry of his own people; he made a position for himself in German literature, was the close friend of the poet and dramatist Lessing, and practically opened to his race the door that gave it access into modern society. Abraham (the second son of Moses and father of Felix), who later in his life said laughingly: "When a boy, I was known as the son of my father; now I am known as the father of my son!" possessed qualities which, though peculiarly Jewish, entitle him to not a little of the glory that distinguished the Mendelssohn family; and these qualities were precisely those of an excellent son and an ideal father. Abraham was clerk in the banking house of Fould in Paris, when he married Lea Salomon, the daughter of a rich merchant in Hamburg. He became associated with his elder brother, who conducted a banking and brokerage business in Hamburg. It was the time of the Napoleonic invasion. War means the destruction of much property; it is also the germ of new fortunes. Abraham settled with his family in Berlin, in 1812; he was a shrewd business man, and the banking house which he founded is still in existence, and is still conducted by his descendants. Abraham made excellent use of his riches, in cultivating arts and letters which had played such great part in the life of his father. His tastes were shared by his wife, a gifted musician, who spoke several languages, and read the old Greek and Latin authors in the original!

It was into this atmosphere of ease and culture that Felix was born at Hamburg, February 3, 1809. Both he and his sister Fanny, four years his elder, showed early signs of great musical talent. Their mother gave them their first music-lessons; but soon they were ready to receive instruction from the best teachers that the father's money could procure. C. F. Zelter, the friend of Goethe, was chosen to teach Felix composition. The boy made wonderful progress. In the art-loving home of the Mendelssohns, all musicians and artists of renown that lived in or passed through Berlin, convened for the famous Sunday evening concerts, the program containing always one or more compositions by the young prodigy. In 1821, Zelter took Felix on a visit to Goethe, at Weimar, where the boy played and extemporized to the great delight of the Grand Old Man. Felix had inherited his grandfather's gift of expression, and the letters of his youth already give remarkable accounts of his experiences. Throughout his life he kept up a lively correspondence with his relatives and friends, which makes excellent and improving reading. Abraham took his son to Paris, in 1825, and asked Cherubini's advice whether or not the boy should continue to pursue a musical profession. Cherubini left no doubt in the father's mind, if any there was, but Abraham would not consent to leaving his son with Cherubini in Paris, and took him back to Berlin, where he kept him under his parental guidance and authority. In 1826, Felix wrote the overture to Shakespeare's "Midsummer Night's Dream," a work which discloses the full ripeness of his musical genius. His first larger opera was performed in Berlin, in 1827, but owing to a poor libretto it had only mediocre success. Intrigues at the opera house added to the young man's annoyance, and the incident was the beginning of a distinct dislike that Mendelssohn felt ever after for Berlin. During his musical studies he had become engrossed in the works of Händel

and Bach, then hardly known by the musical public. It is not one of Mendelssohn's smallest merits to have rediscovered these works; and his performance of Bach's music for the "Passion according to St. Matthew" on March 11, 1829, at Berlin, will ever remain a memorable date in the history of music.

Sent by his father, who always acted as his son's adviser, he travelled to Switzerland and Italy, to France and in 1829 to England, where he achieved triumphs as pianist, composer and conductor. He visited England nine times, and travelled through Scotland and Ireland, finding inspiration wherever he went—witness his "Italian Symphony," "Scotch Symphony," "Venetian Gondolier Songs," "Hebrides" overture, "Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage," and so many other compositions. His famous "Songs without Words" were really sketches of a traveller, written for the delectation of those who had stayed at home. They may have the slightness of such sketches, but they also have the vividness of indelible impressions made on a sensitive and cultured mind, and are drawn with infinite charm and grace. Mendelssohn acted as conductor at various musical festivals, and spent a short time as musical director in Düsseldorf, where his oratorio "St. Paul" was brought out in 1836. Like his brother and his two sisters, he was brought up in the Christian religion, and in 1837 married the daughter of a Protestant clergyman. His appointment as conductor of the Leipzig Gewandhaus orchestra, in 1835, had given him at last a position worthy of his extraordinary talents. His influence made Leipzig the center of musical life in Germany; his founding of the Leipzig Conservatory of Music, in 1843, created an institution which long remained a model of its kind. On his last visit to England, in 1846, he produced at Birmingham his great oratorio "Elijah."

On his return to Leipzig, he began to feel the effect of overwork; he resigned the conductorship of the orchestra. The death of his beloved sister Fanny broke his heart; he passed away November 4, 1847.

Only at the end of his days did Felix Mendelssohn learn to know the sorrow of bereavement and the tragedy of human helplessness. But then it was too late for him to voice his grief in tones. As his life was full of sunshine, so is his music; the overpowering, elemental note is missing even in his largest works. He was a classicist by education, and a romanticist through contagion. Weber's music decidedly influenced him. Fairy tale and folklore attracted him as much as it had the older master. Hence his music for a "Midsummer Night's Dream," for Goethe's "The First Walpurgis-Night," the fragments of an opera "The Loreley," and his overture "The Lovely Melusine." He wrote several choral works besides his two oratorios, much chamber-music, and a violin concerto that is especially noteworthy. All of his music bears the stamp of refinement, the glitter and opulence of the surroundings that made his life an unusually active and happy one.

C. E.

MASTER SERIES FOR THE YOUNG

In presenting this unique series, issued especially to meet the need of the young pianist for material from the master composers for the instrument, a work is put before the public which, it is hoped, will fill a long-felt want.

Each volume contains a collection of the technically easiest compositions of the master represented, arranged progressively with regard to difficulty, and edited and fingered from a thoroughly modern standpoint. The numbers included were all penned especially for the instrument by their composers, so that the edition contains none of the tasteless arrangements from operas, symphonies, string quartets, and so forth, which have disfigured many publications of like nature in the past.

Naturally, the volumes do not all represent one particular "grade" of difficulty. Chopin and Grieg, for example, wrote no specific "children's pieces," as Schumann and Tschaikowsky did, and Mendelssohn's "Pieces for Children" require a technical development much more advanced than that demanded by the simpler compositions of Bach, Handel and Mozart. Each volume may be looked upon as an introduction to the study of the individual style and characteristic manner of the composer in question.

The use of excerpts from larger compositions has been necessary in a few instances, on account of the lack of sufficient appropriate material among the composer's works. In the case of some of the older compositions, undue prolixity has been avoided by a judicious paring of the numbers.

Attention is called to the completeness and accuracy of the modern pedal markings, the observance of which will result in the development of the student's taste and ear in the direction of correct pedalling. The use of the antiquated and inexact "Ped. ★" has been done away with entirely. Where pedal marks are absent, as in the case of the Bach and Handel numbers, which were written for instruments not equipped with the damper pedal, the use of the latter is to be avoided.

EDWIN HUGHES

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Theme in B flat

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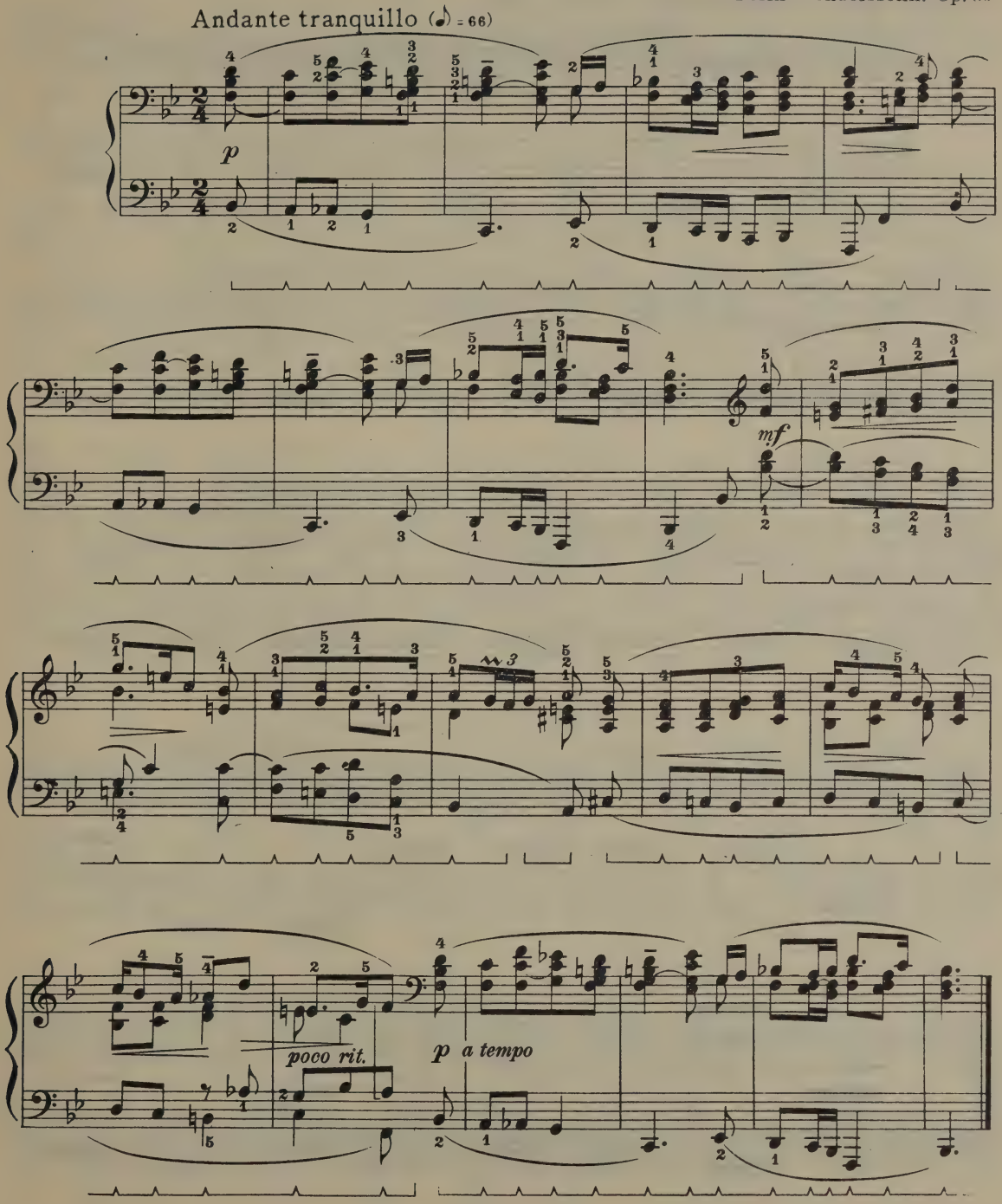
Felix Mendelssohn. Op. 83



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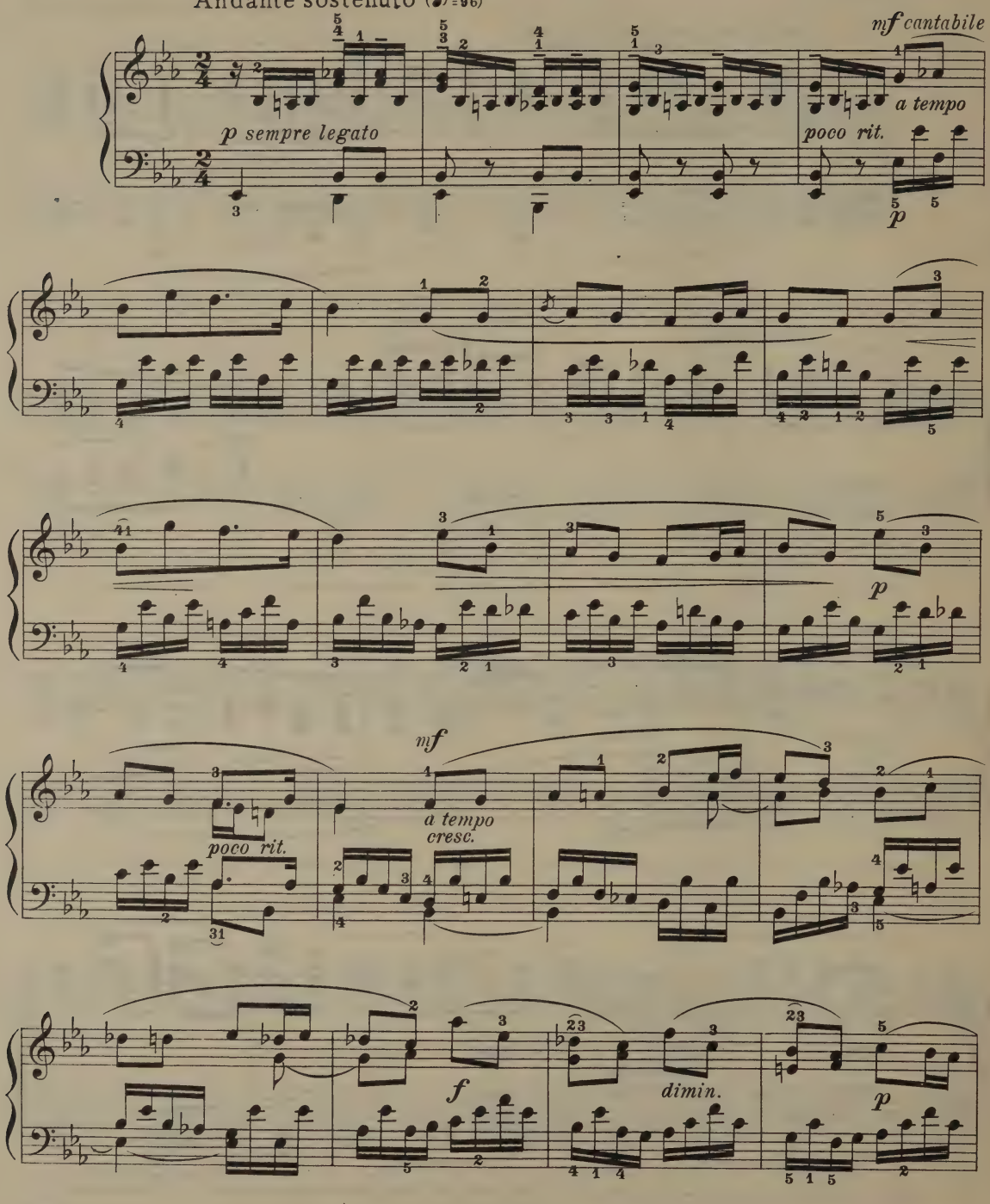
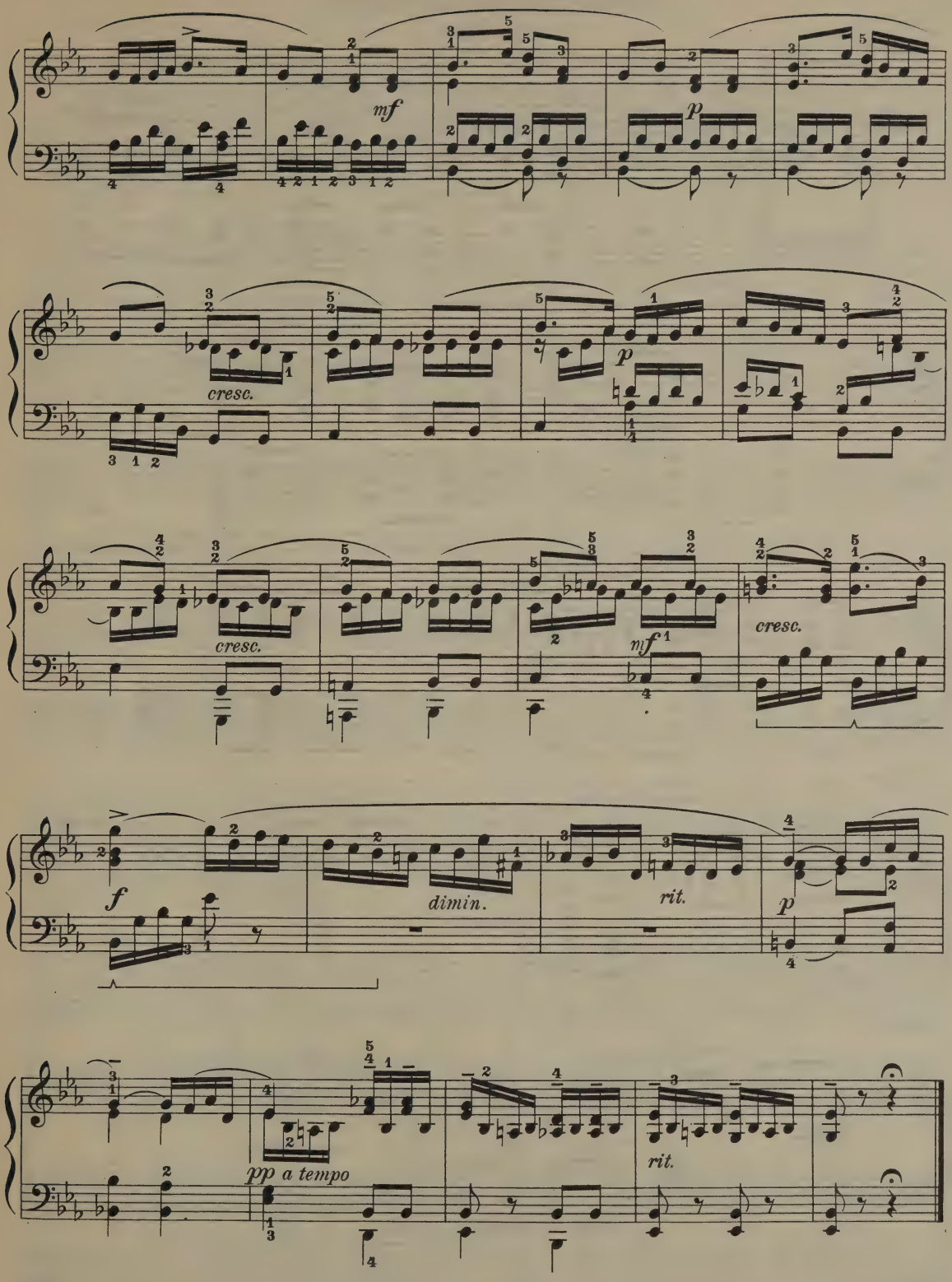
Children's Piece

From "Six Pieces for Children"

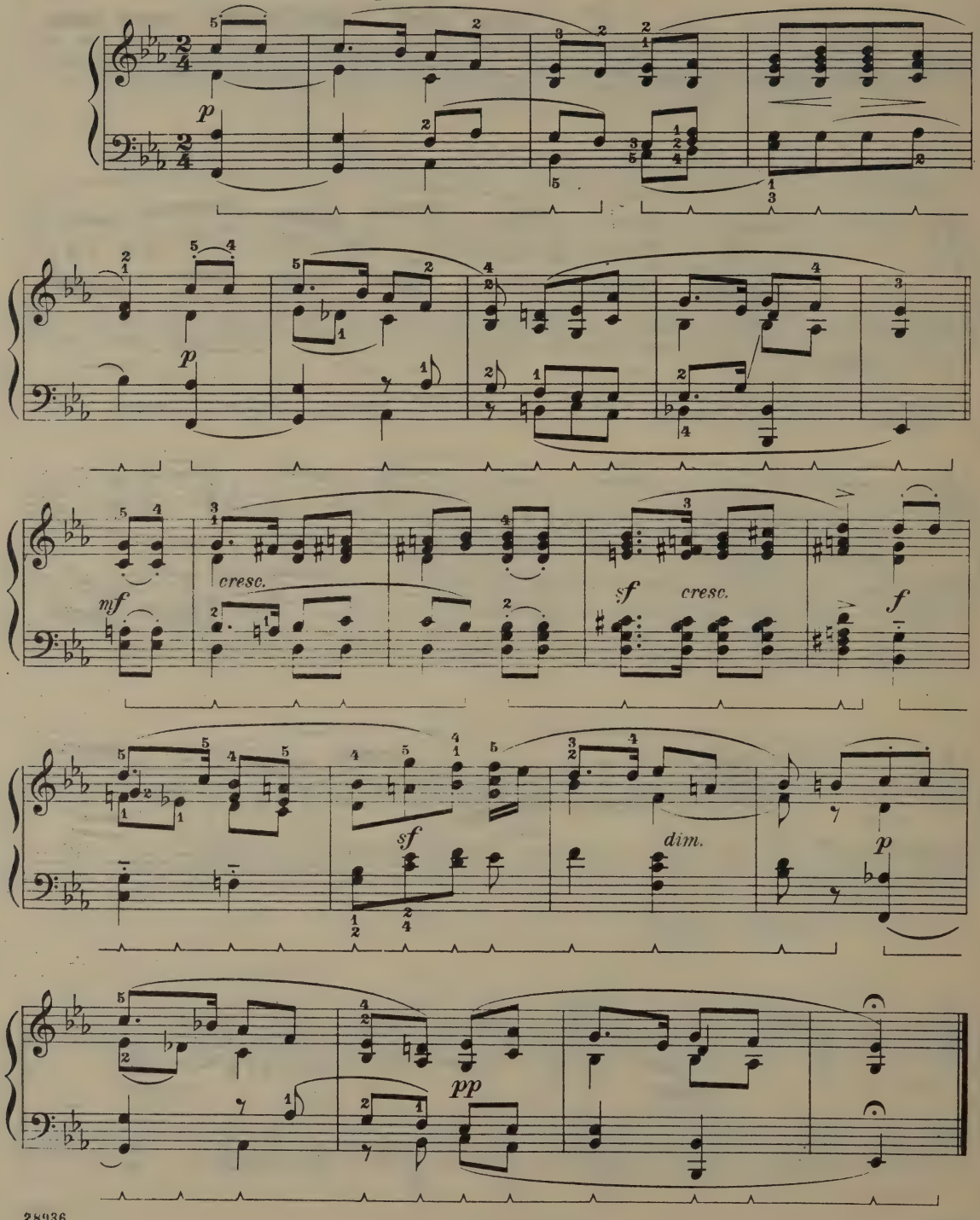
Op. 72, No. 2




mf
p
cresc.
p
cresc.
cresc.
mf
f
dimin.
rit.
p
pp a tempo
rit.

Theme in E flat

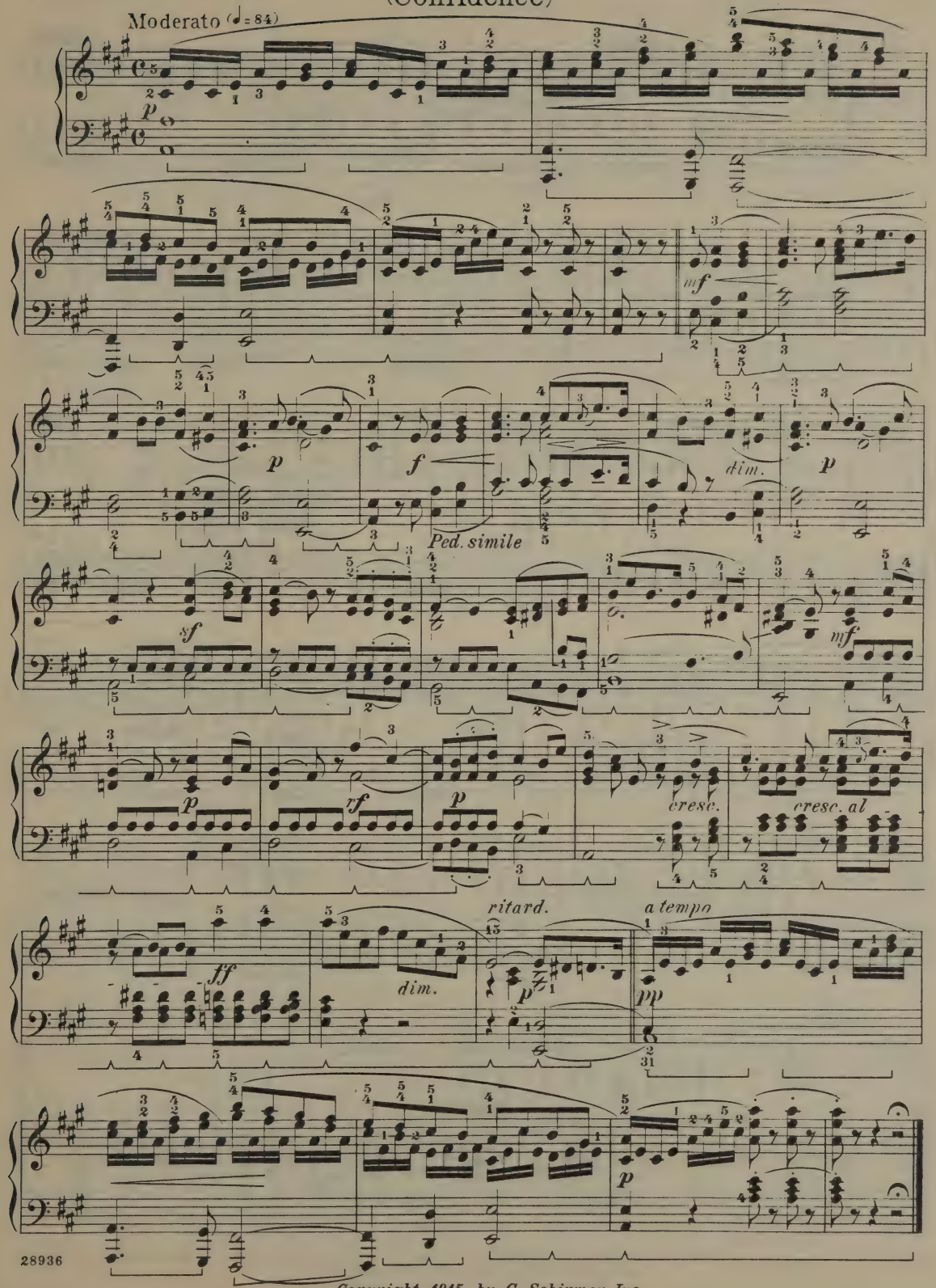
Andante assai espressivo (♩ = 50) Op. 82



Song Without Words

(Confidence)

Op. 19, No. 4



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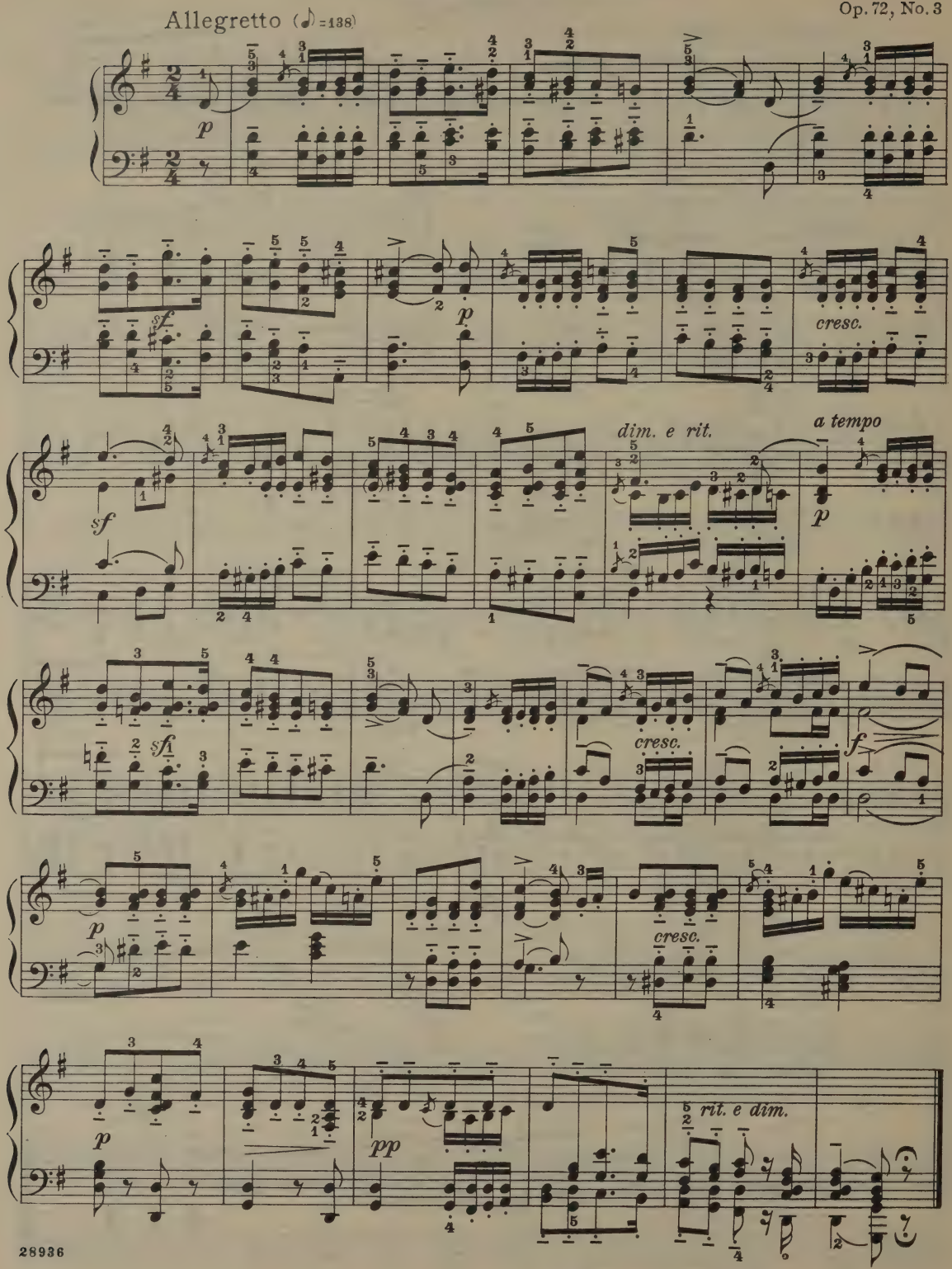
Children's Piece

From "Six Pieces for Children"

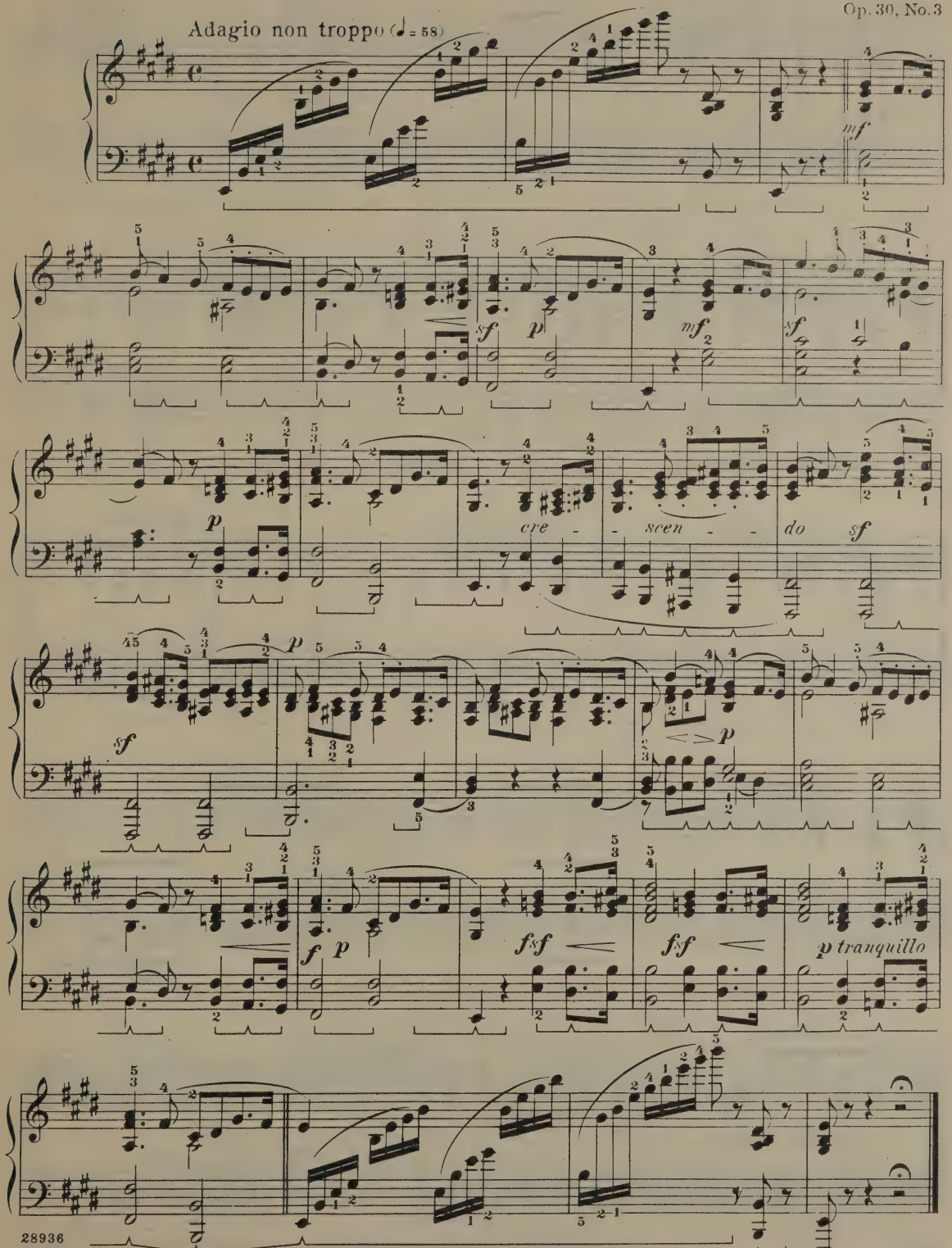
Op. 72, No. 3



Song Without Words

(Consolation)

Op. 30, No. 3



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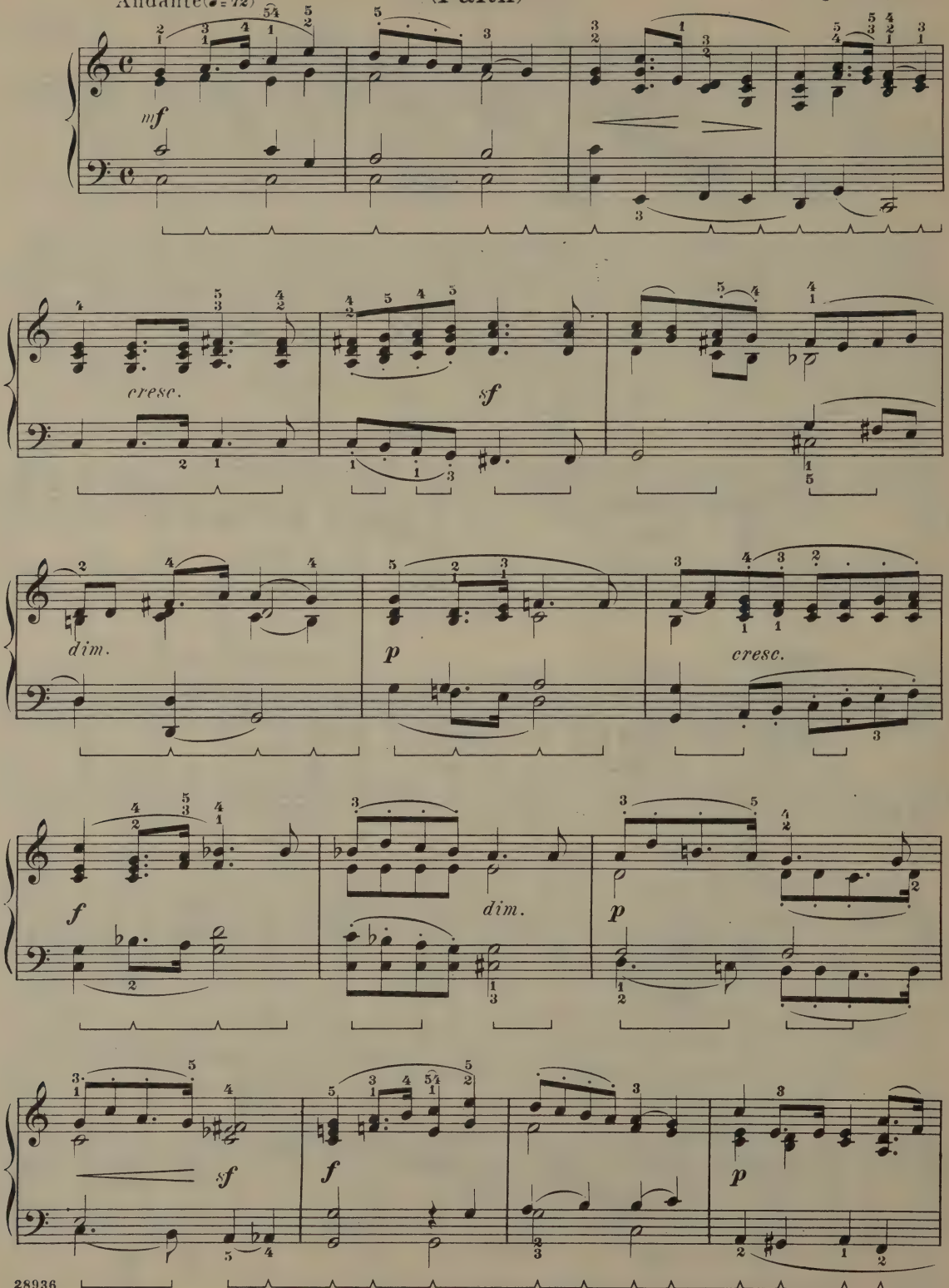
Song Without Words

(Faith)

Op. 102, No. 6



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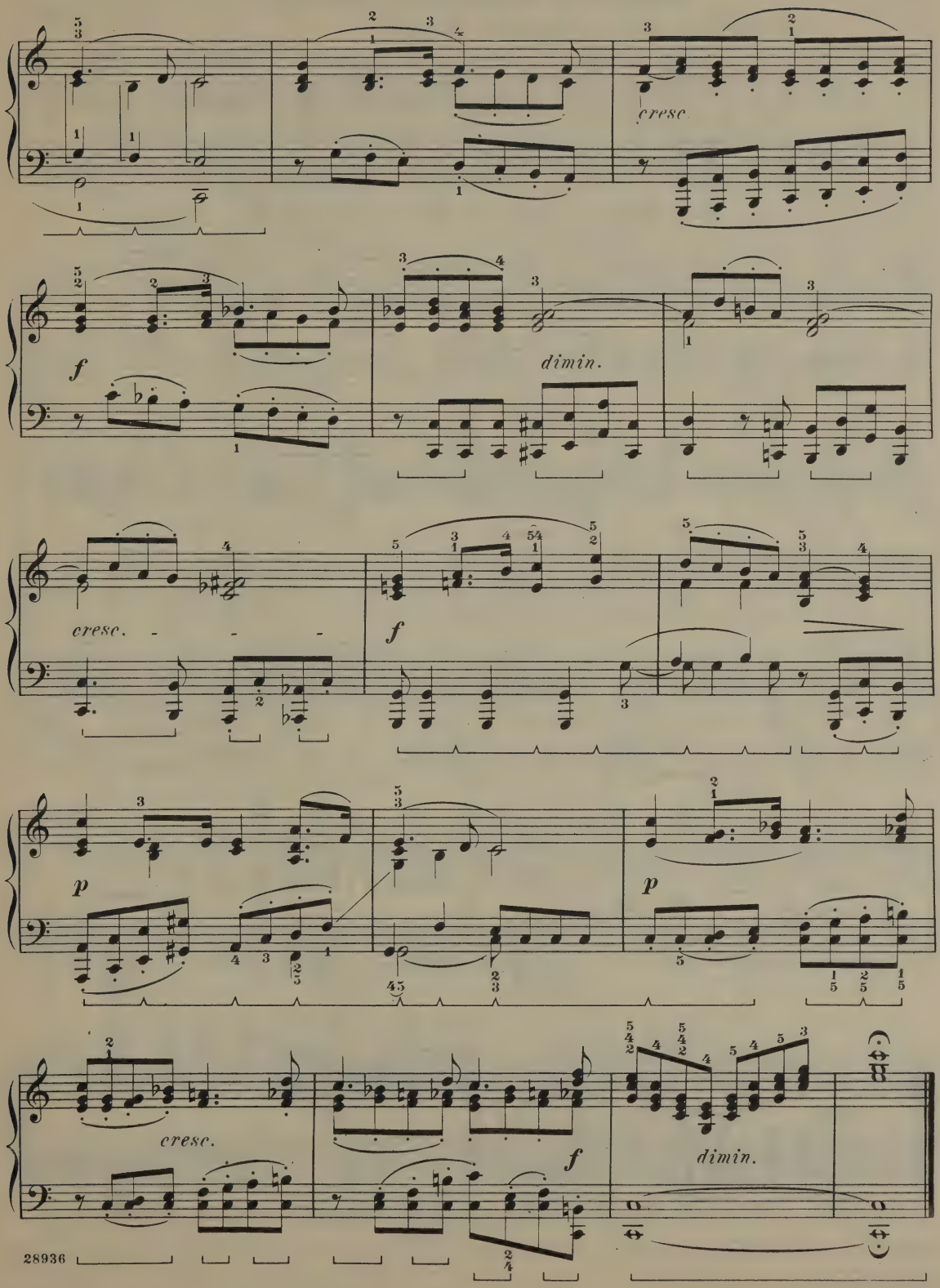
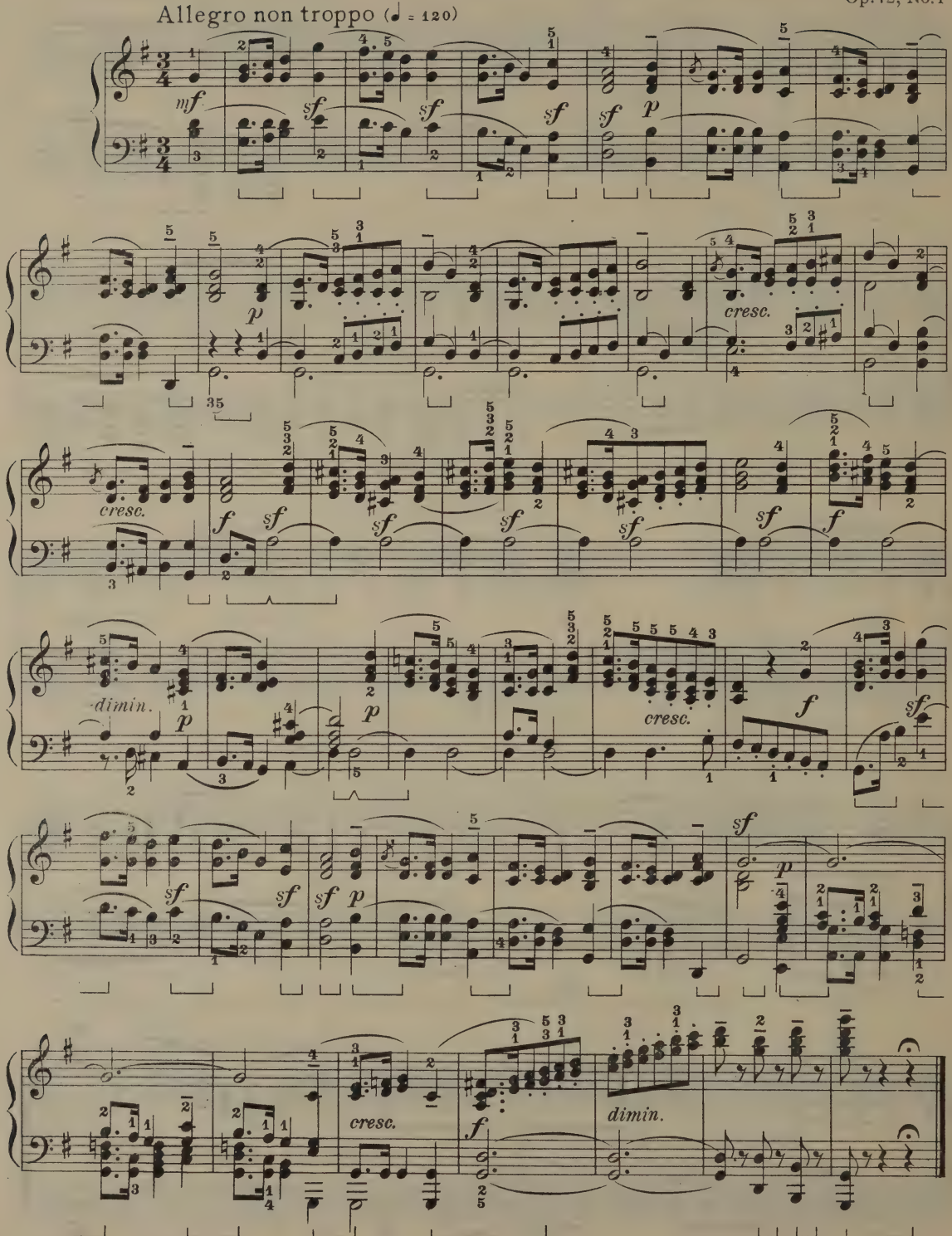

cresc.
f
dimin.
cresc. - - -
f
p
p
cresc.
f
dimin.

Children's Piece

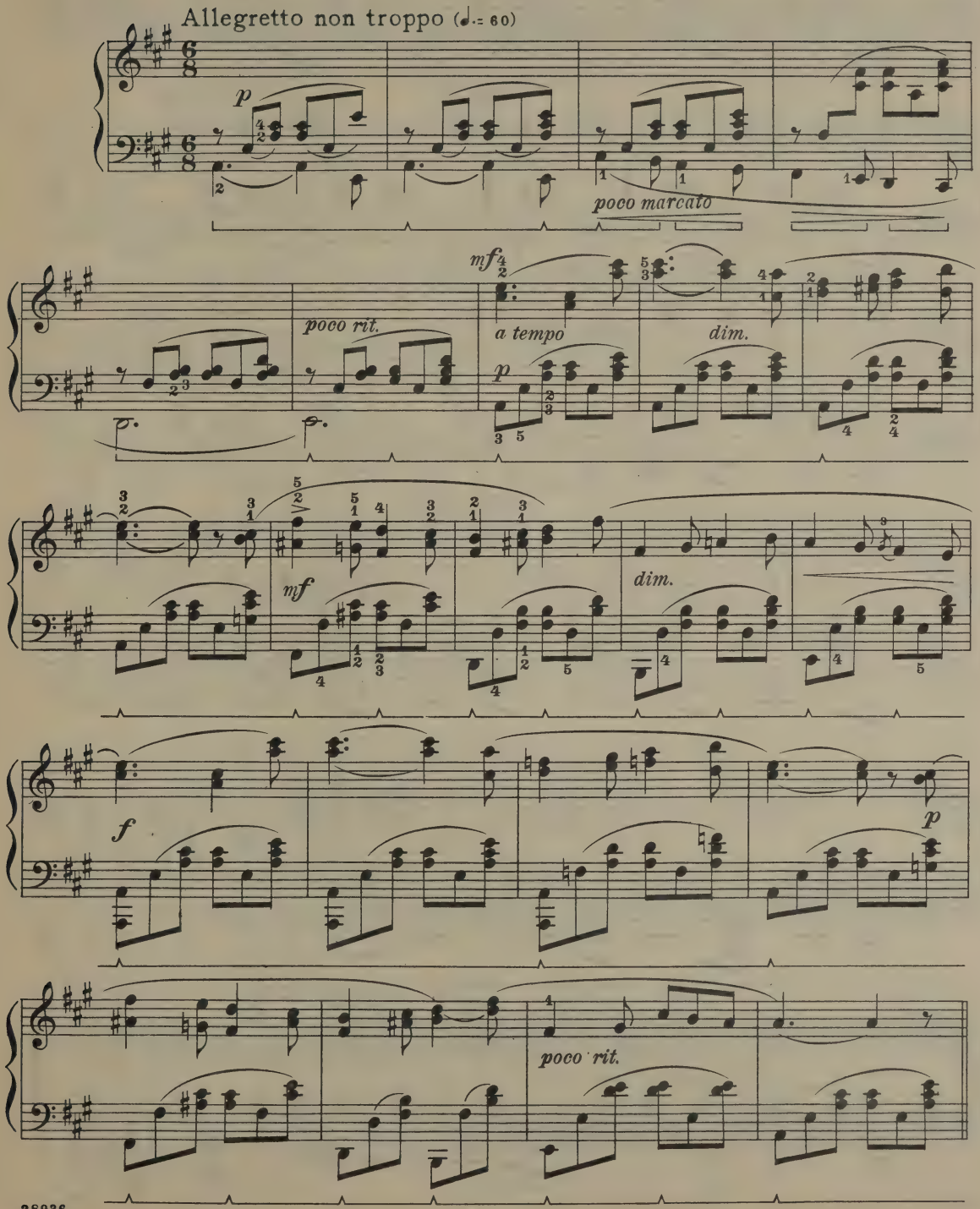
From "Six Pieces for Children"

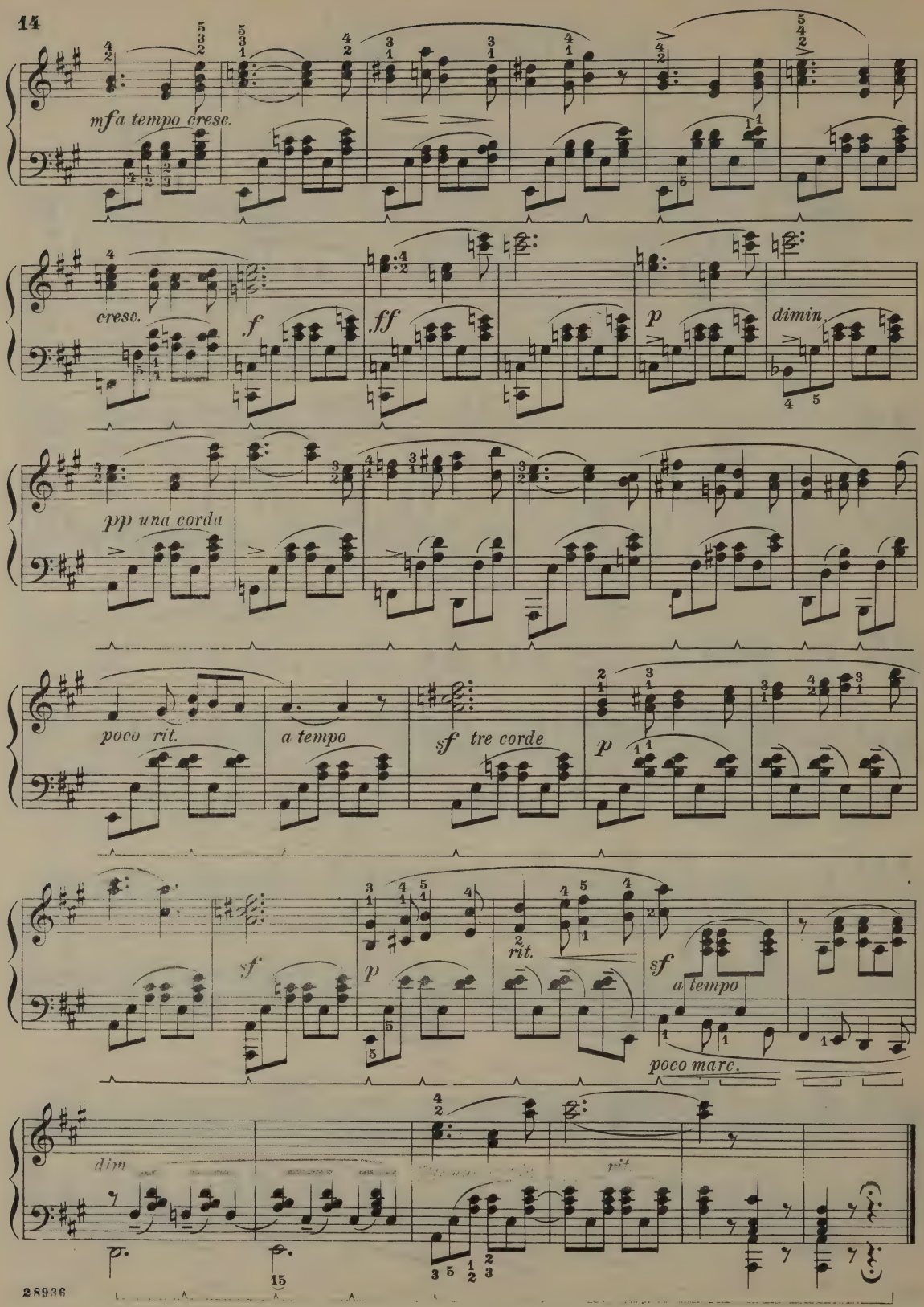
Op. 72, No. 1



Song Without Words

(Boat-Song)



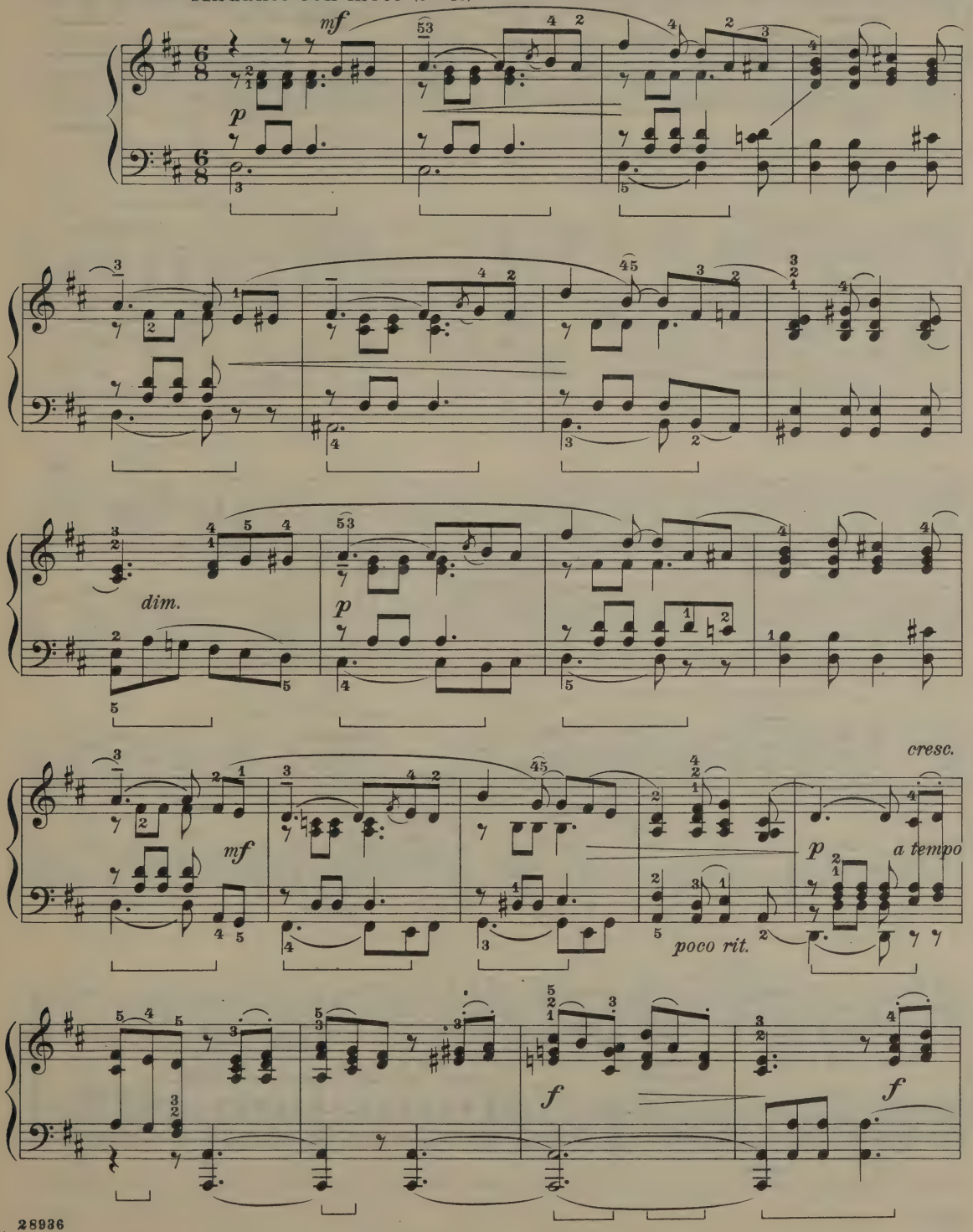

mf a tempo cresc.
cresc.
f
ff
p
dimin.
pp una corda
poco rit.
a tempo
sf tre corde
p
sf
p
rit.
sf
a tempo
poco marc.
dim
rit.

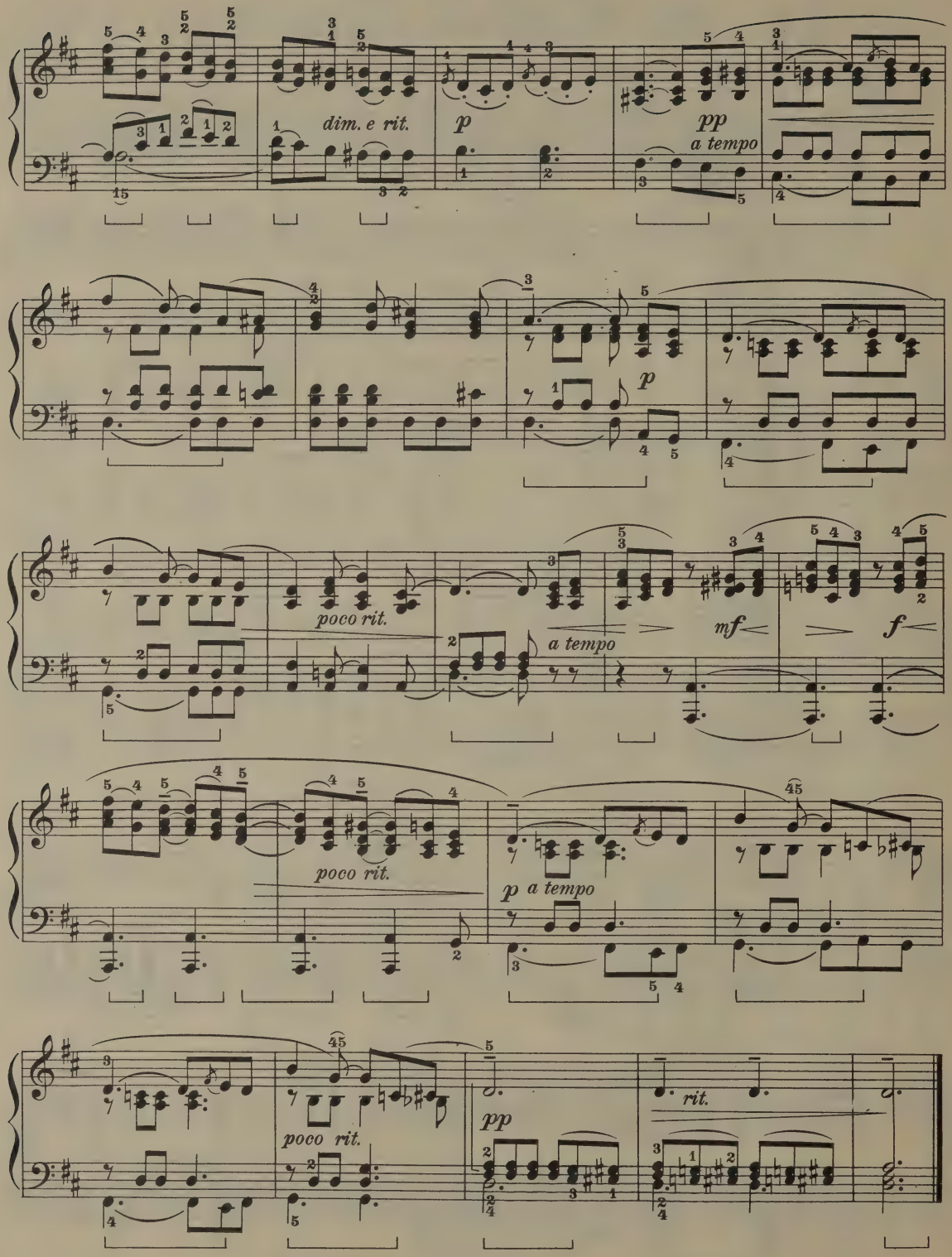
Children's Piece

From "Six Pieces for Children"

Andante con moto (♩. = 48)

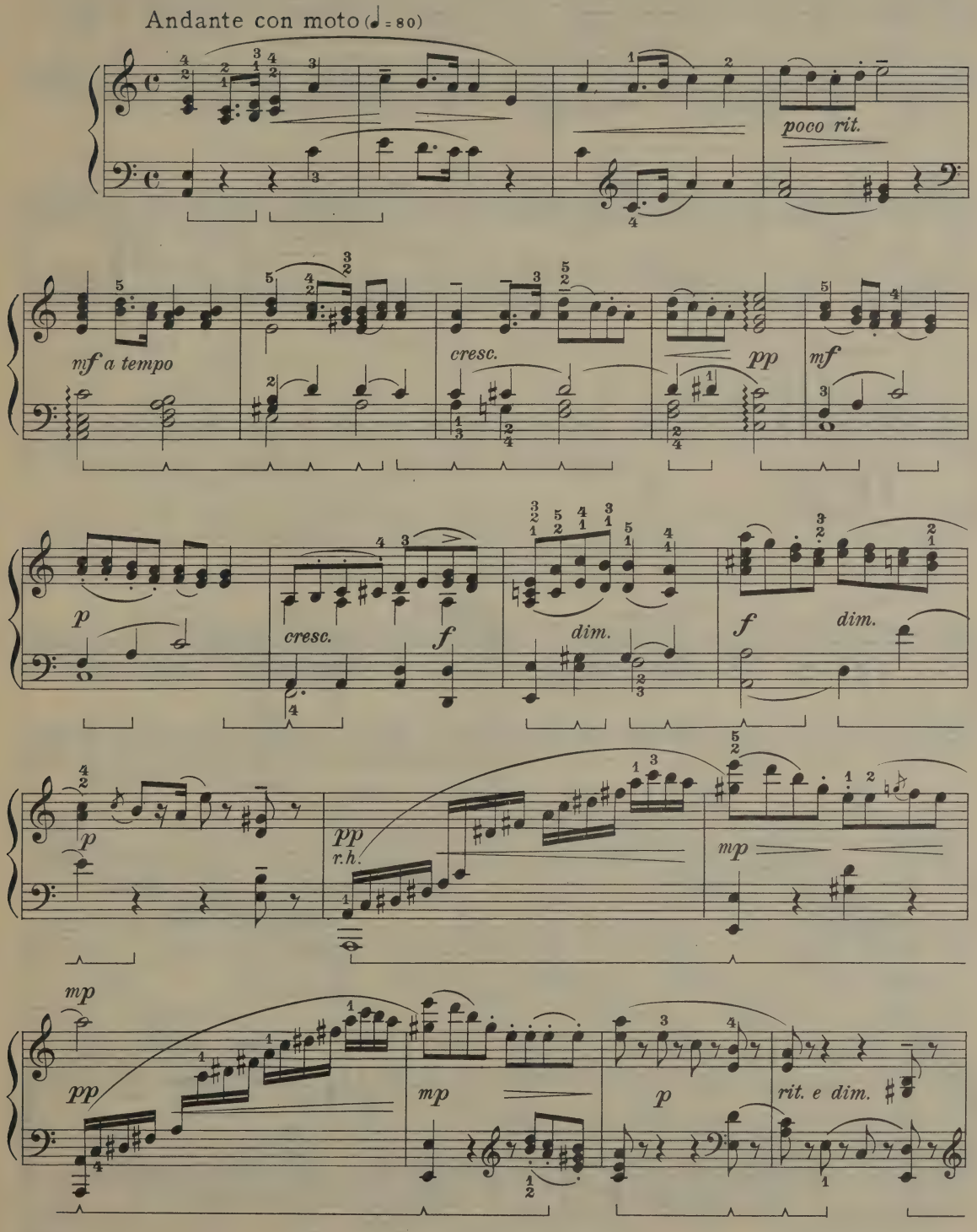
Op. 72, No. 4

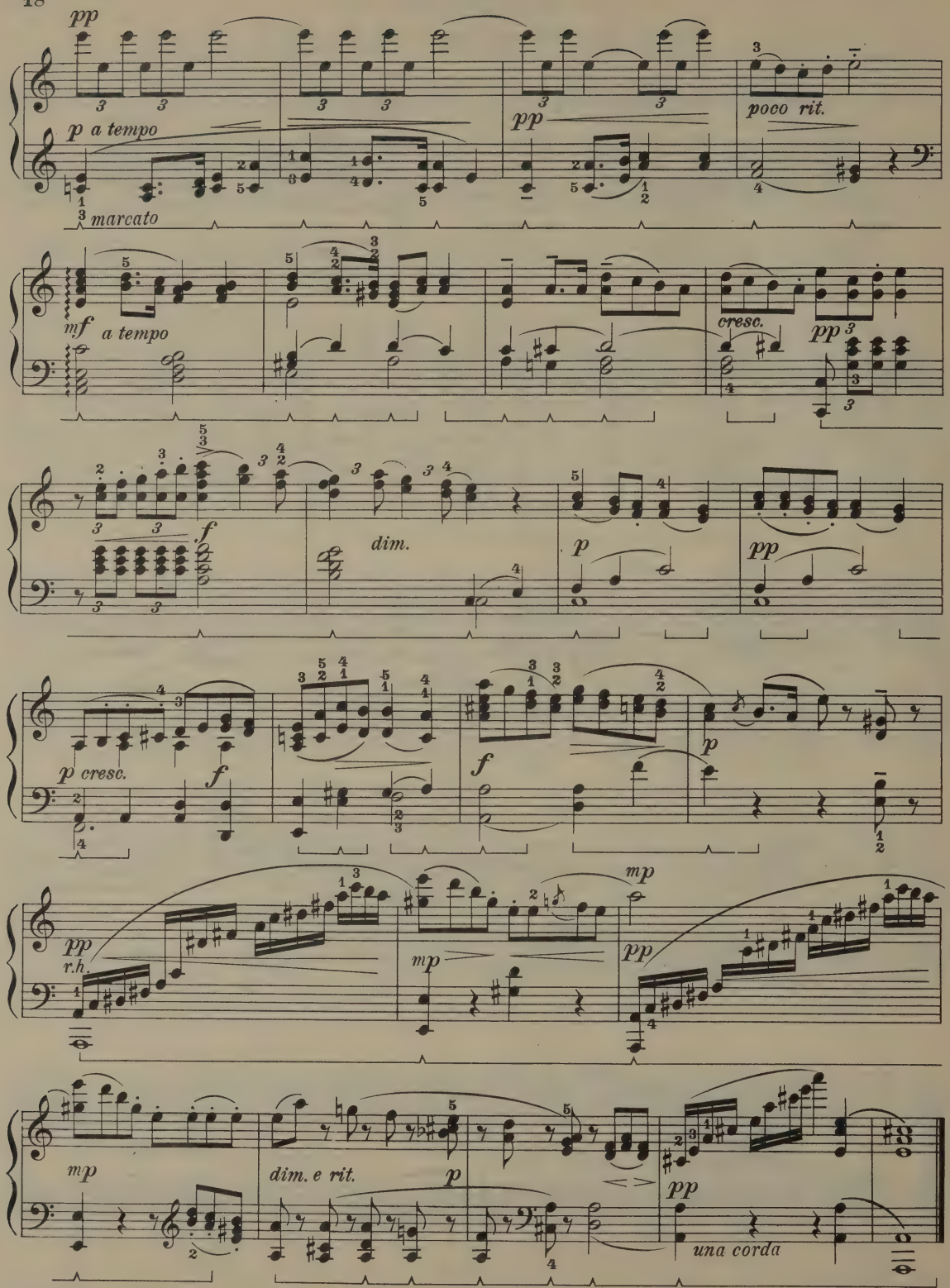



dim. e rit.
p
pp
a tempo
p
poco rit.
a tempo
mf
f
poco rit.
p a tempo
poco rit.
pp
rit.

Andante

From the Fantasie, Op. 16, No. 1

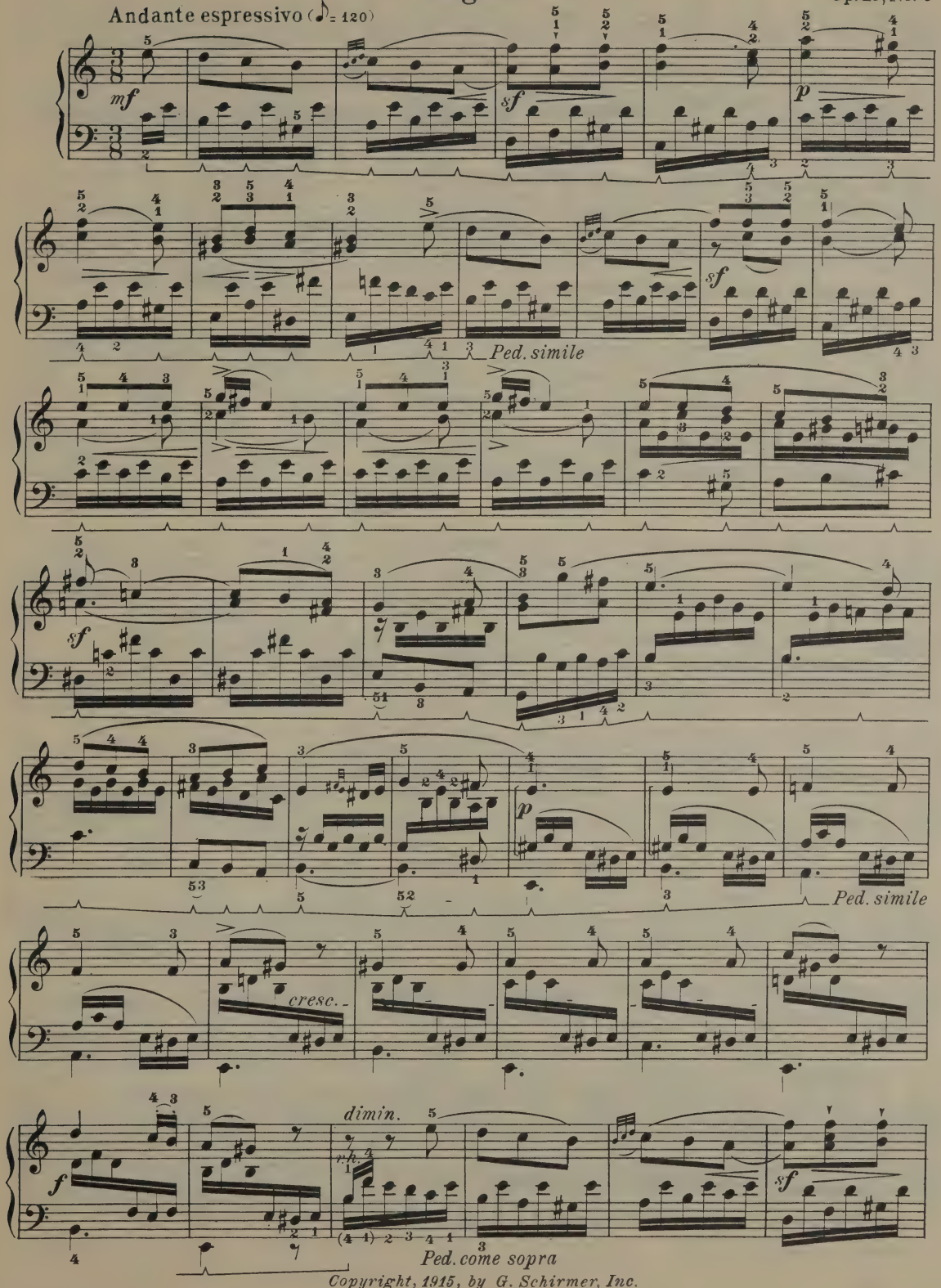



pp
p a tempo
pp
poco rit.
marcato
mf
a tempo
cresc.
pp
f
dim.
p
pp
p cresc.
f
f
p
pp
r.h.
mp
mp
pp
mp
dim. e rit.
p
pp
una corda

Song Without Words

(Regrets)

Op. 19, No. 2



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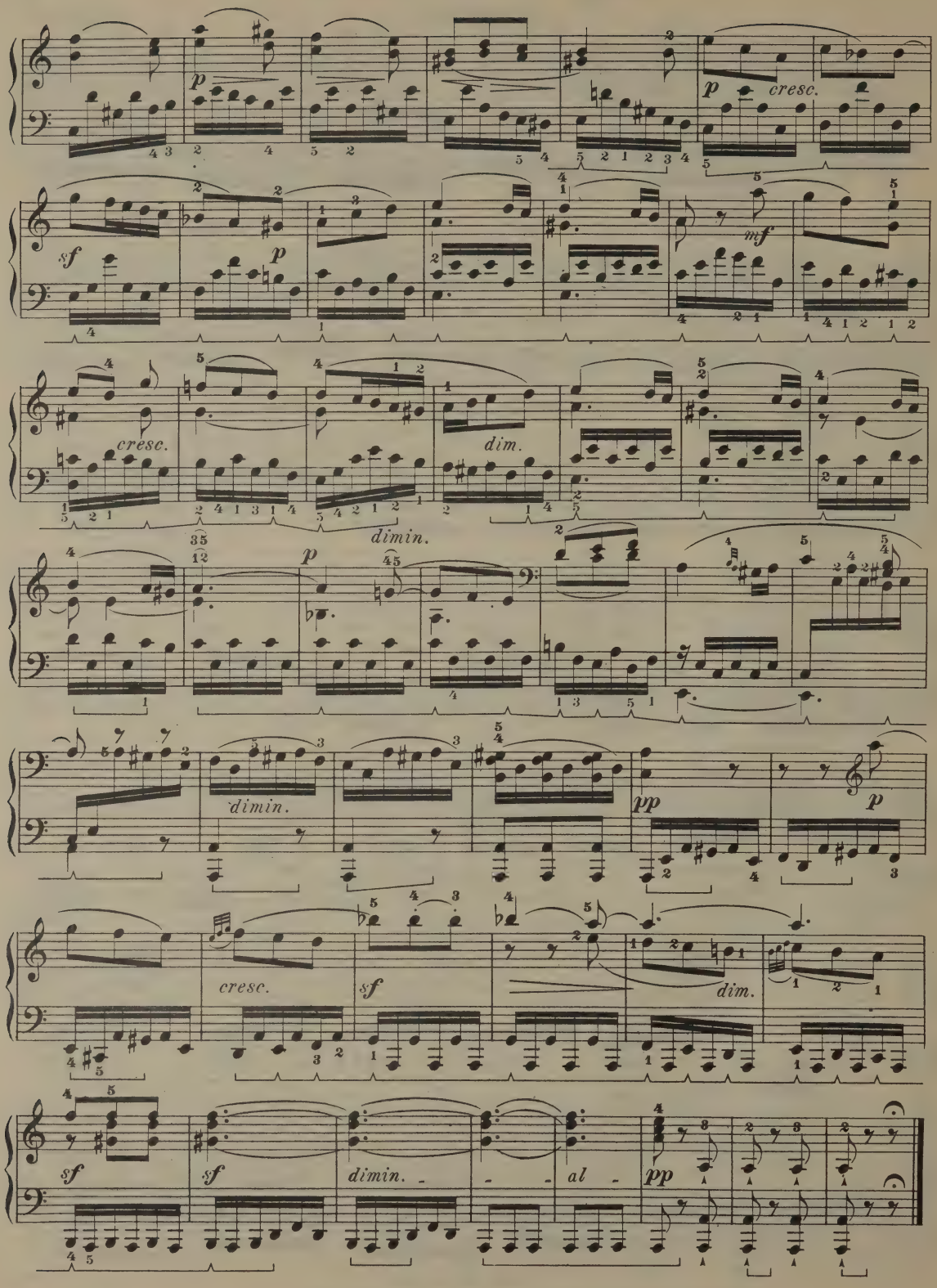
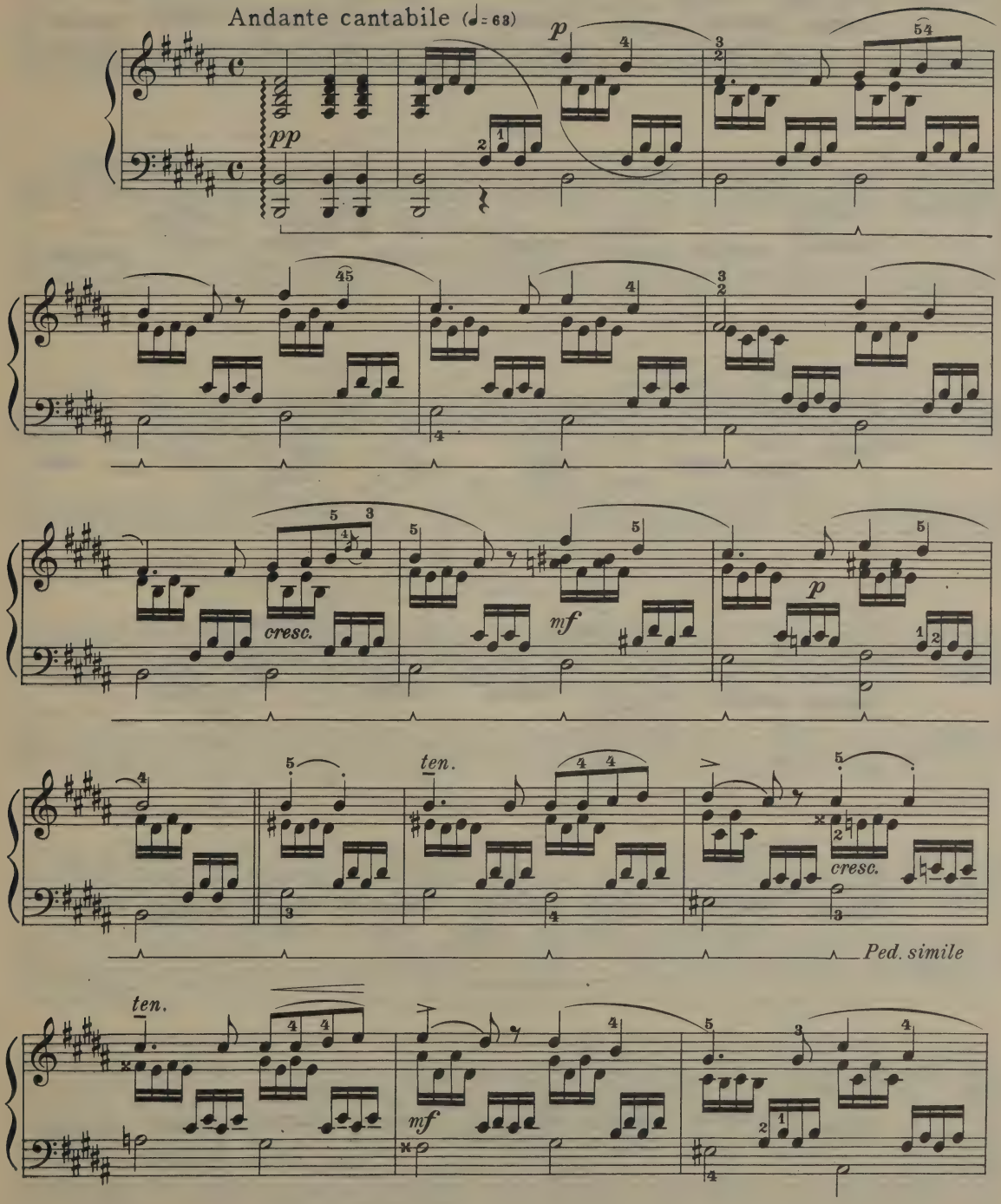
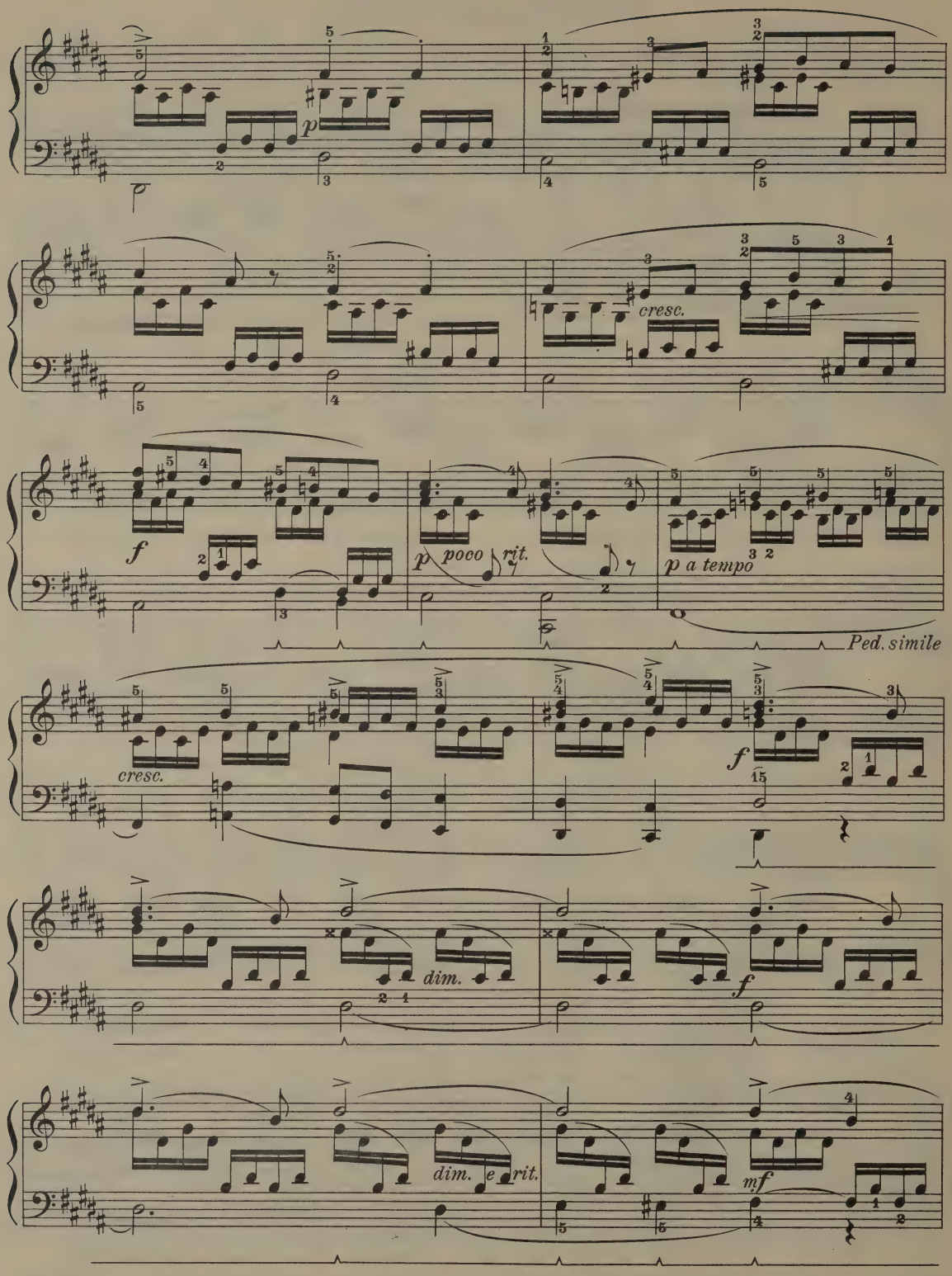
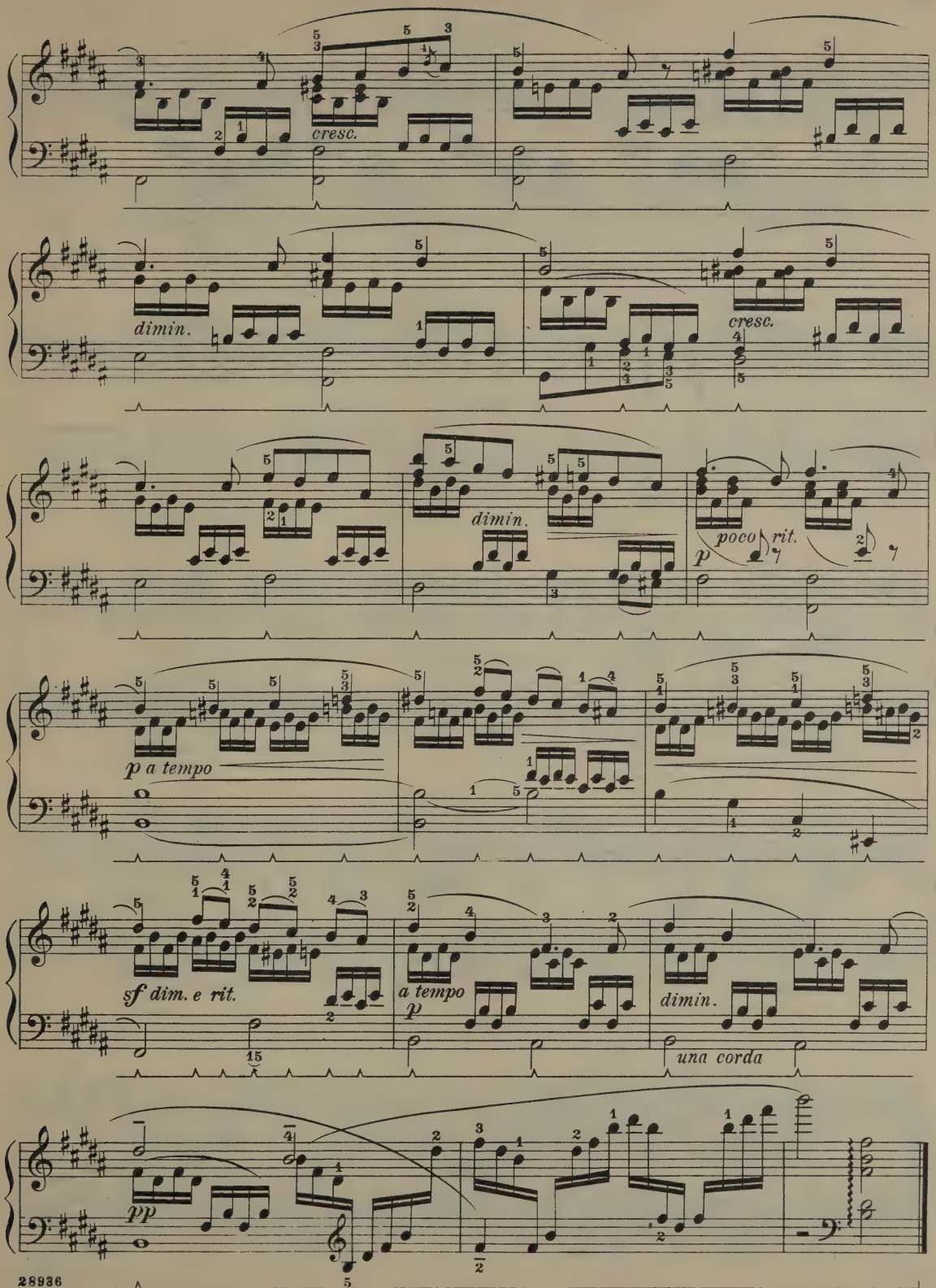

p
p
cresc.
sf
p
mf
cresc.
dim.
dimin.
p
dimin.
pp
p
cresc.
sf
dim.
sf
sf
dimin.
al
pp

Andante Cantabile

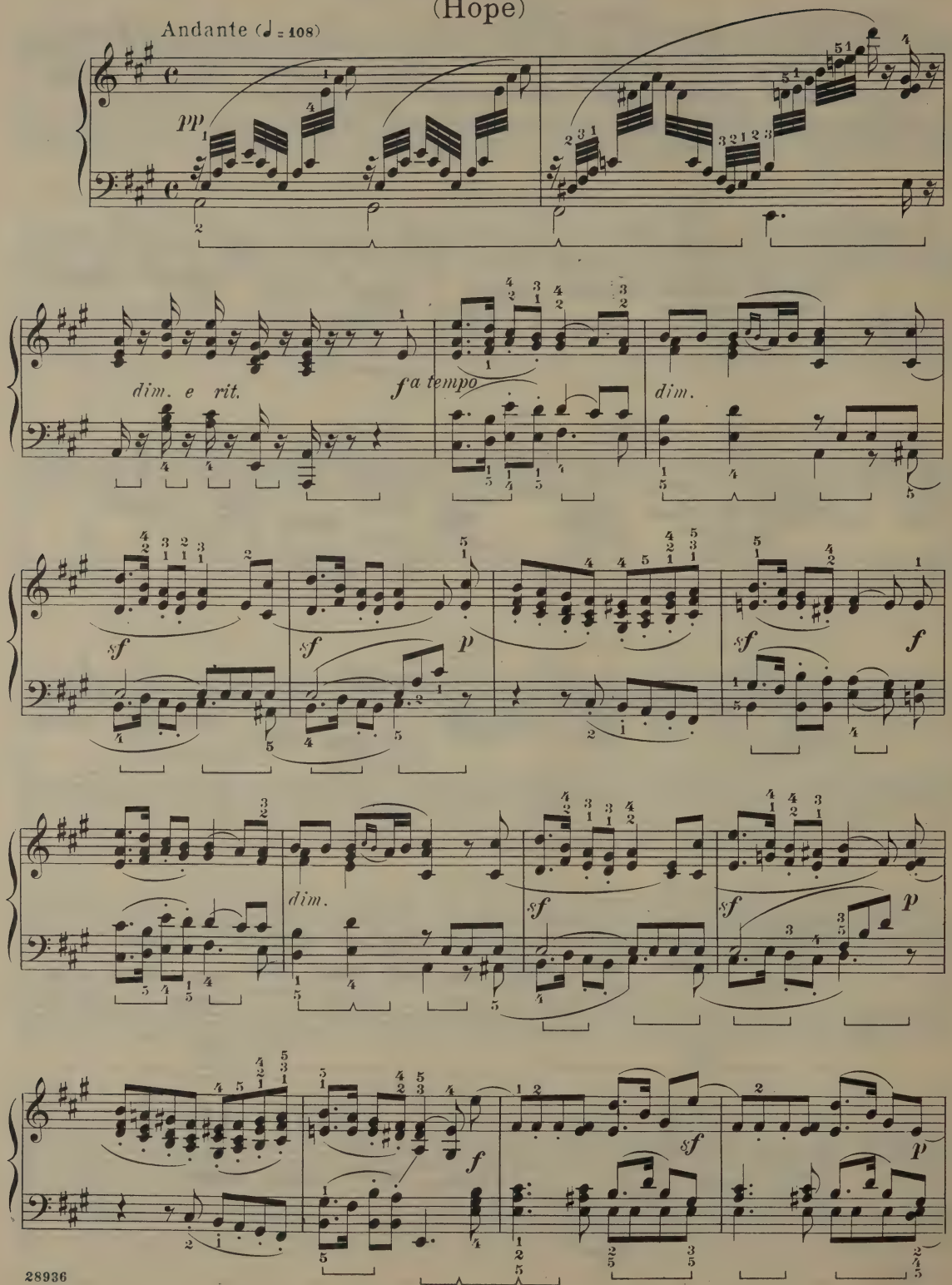



p
cresc.
f
p poco rit.
p a tempo
Ped. simile
cresc.
f
dim.
f
dim. e rit.
mf


cresc.
dimin.
cresc.
dimin.
poco rit.
p
p a tempo
sf dim. e rit.
a tempo
p
dimin.
una corda
pp

Song Without Words

(Hope)



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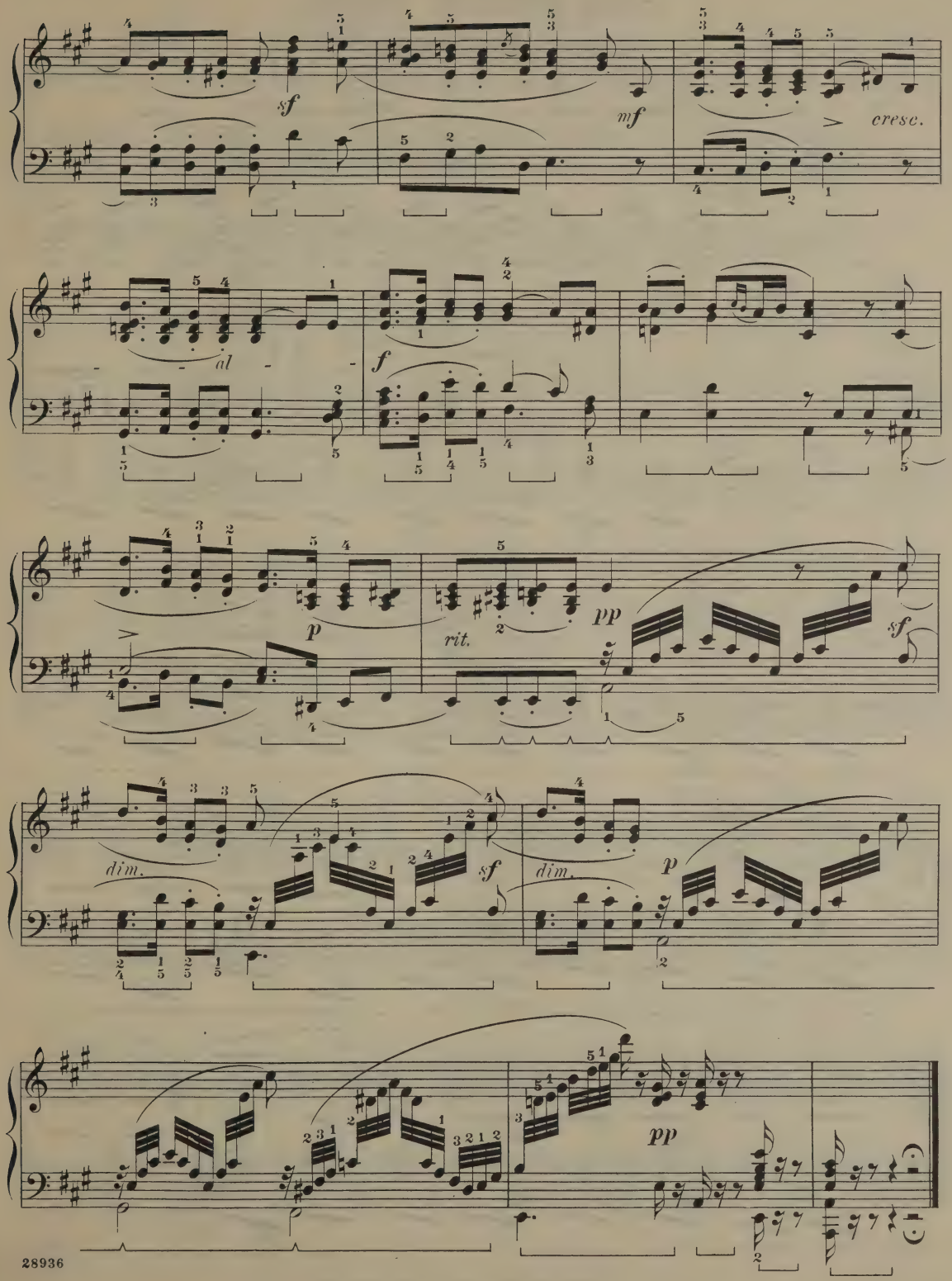
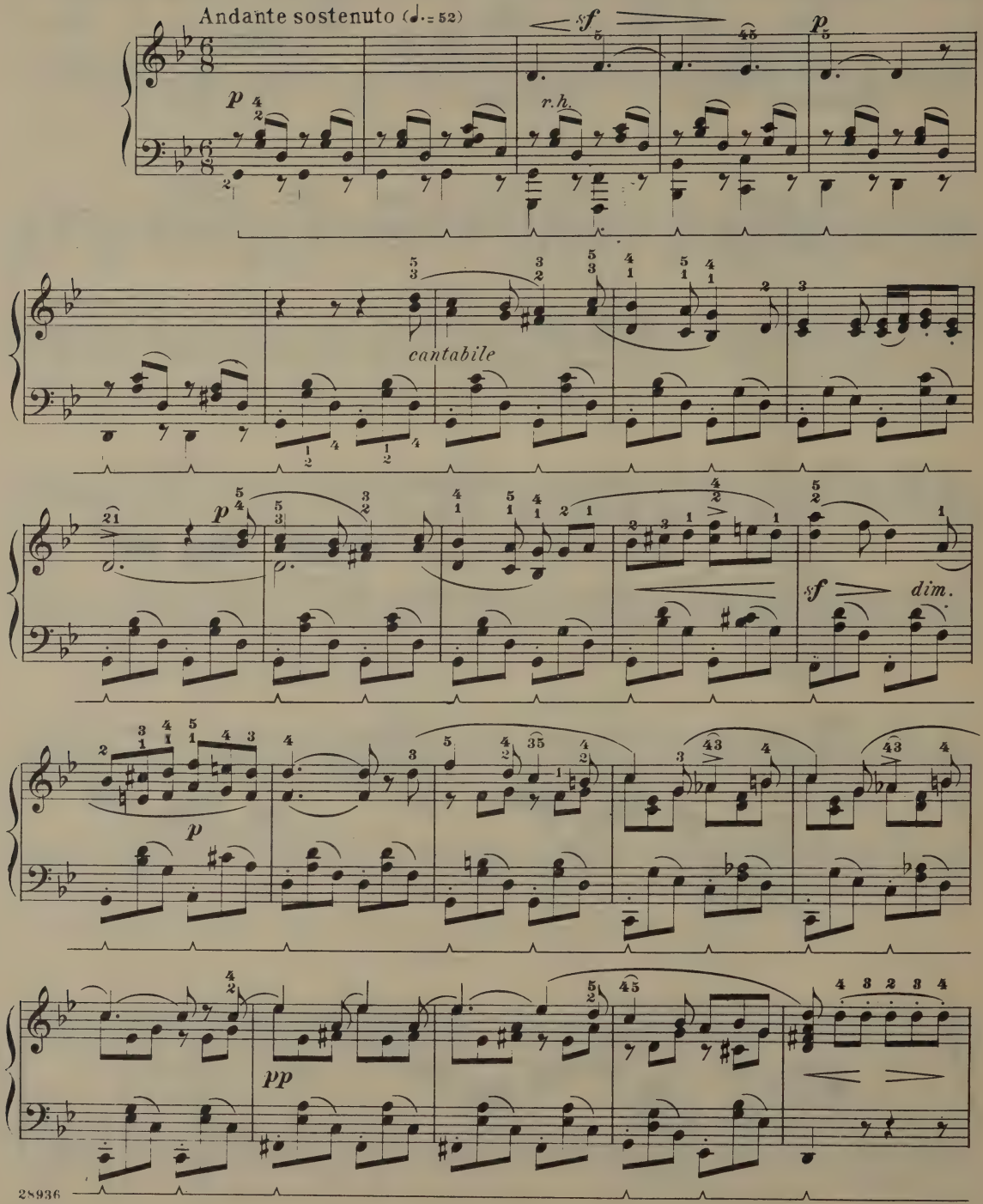

sf
mf
cresc.
al
f
p
rit.
pp
sf
dim.
sf
dim.
p
pp

Song Without Words

(Venetian Boat-Song No.1)

Op. 19, No. 6



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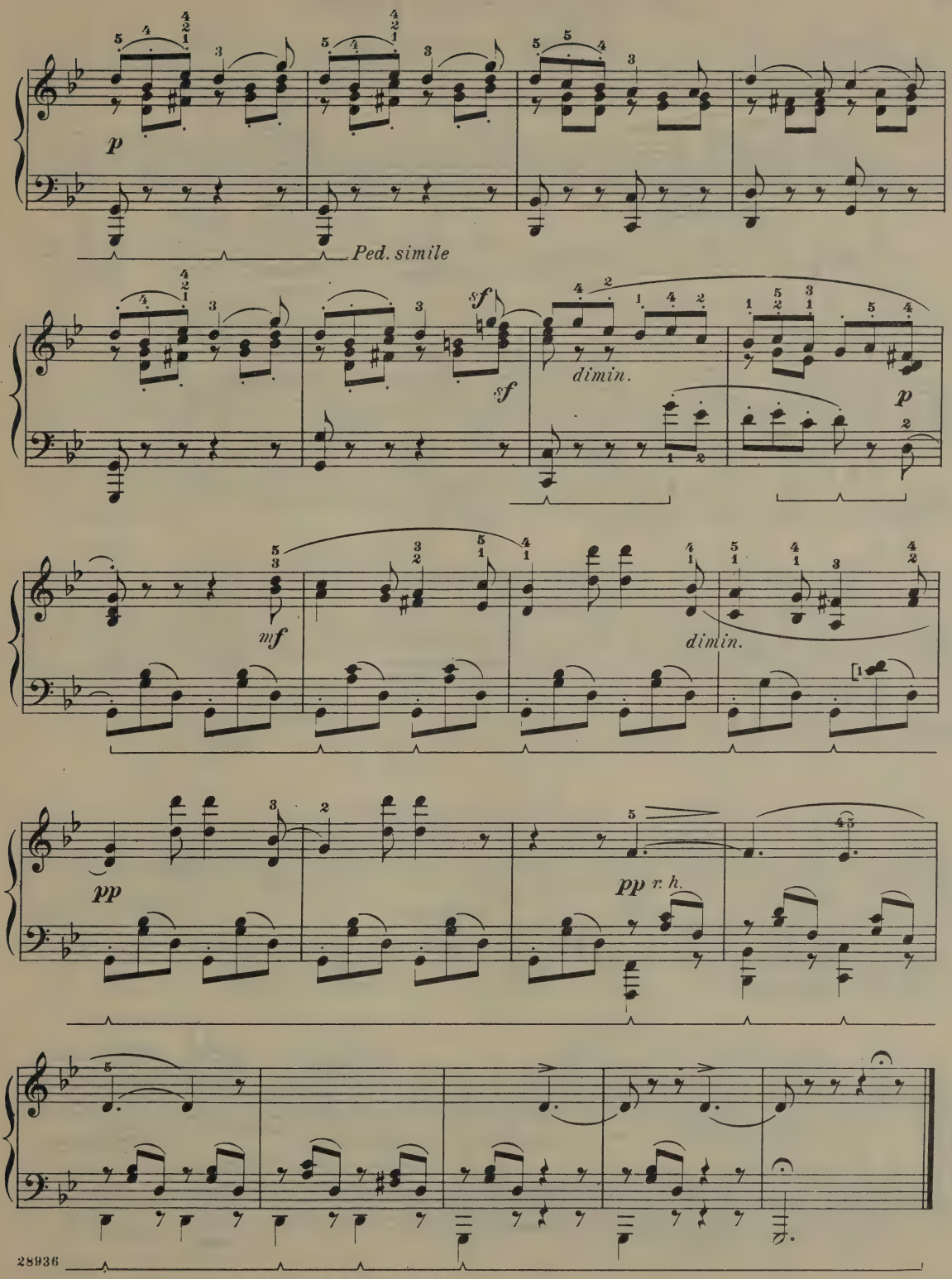
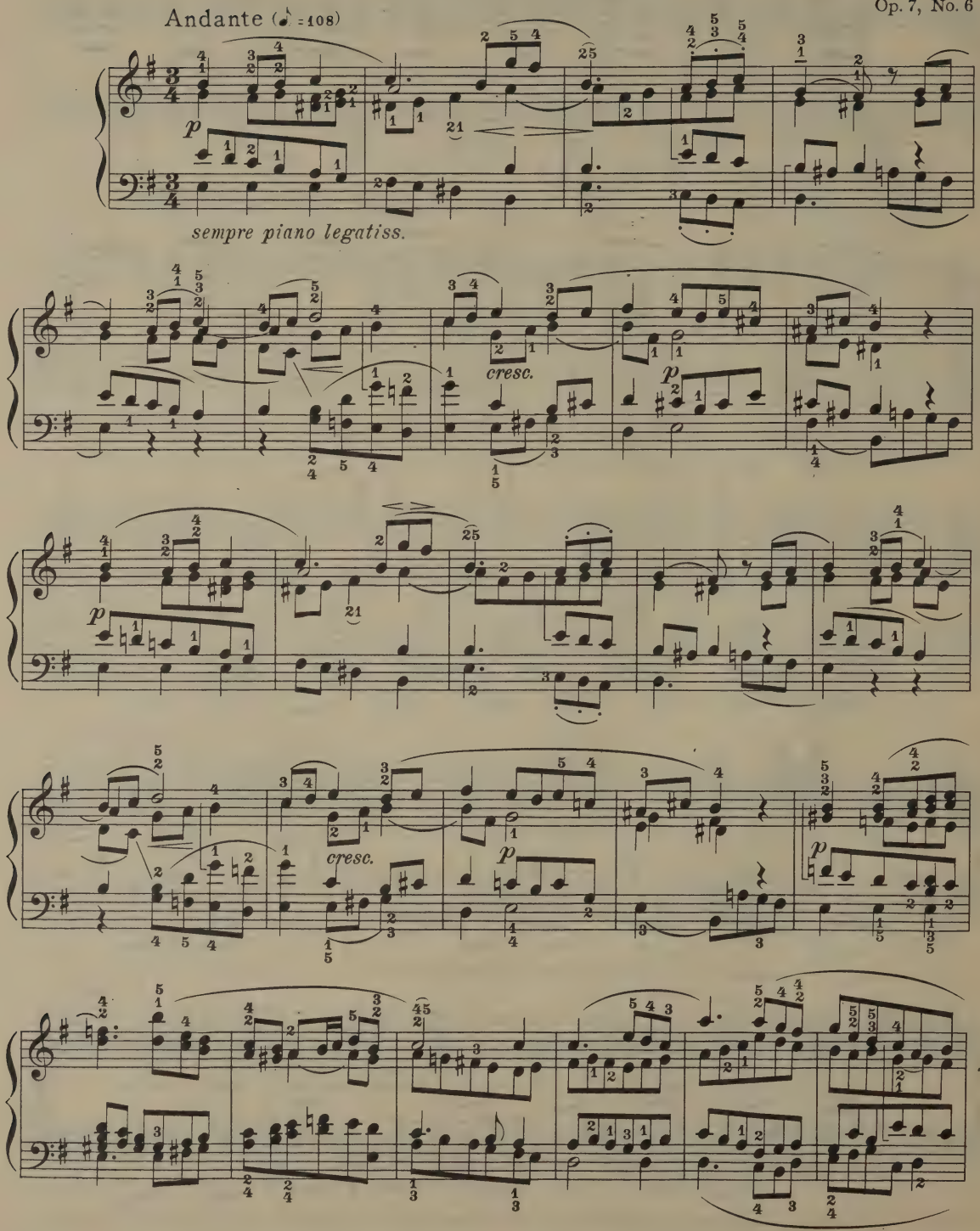
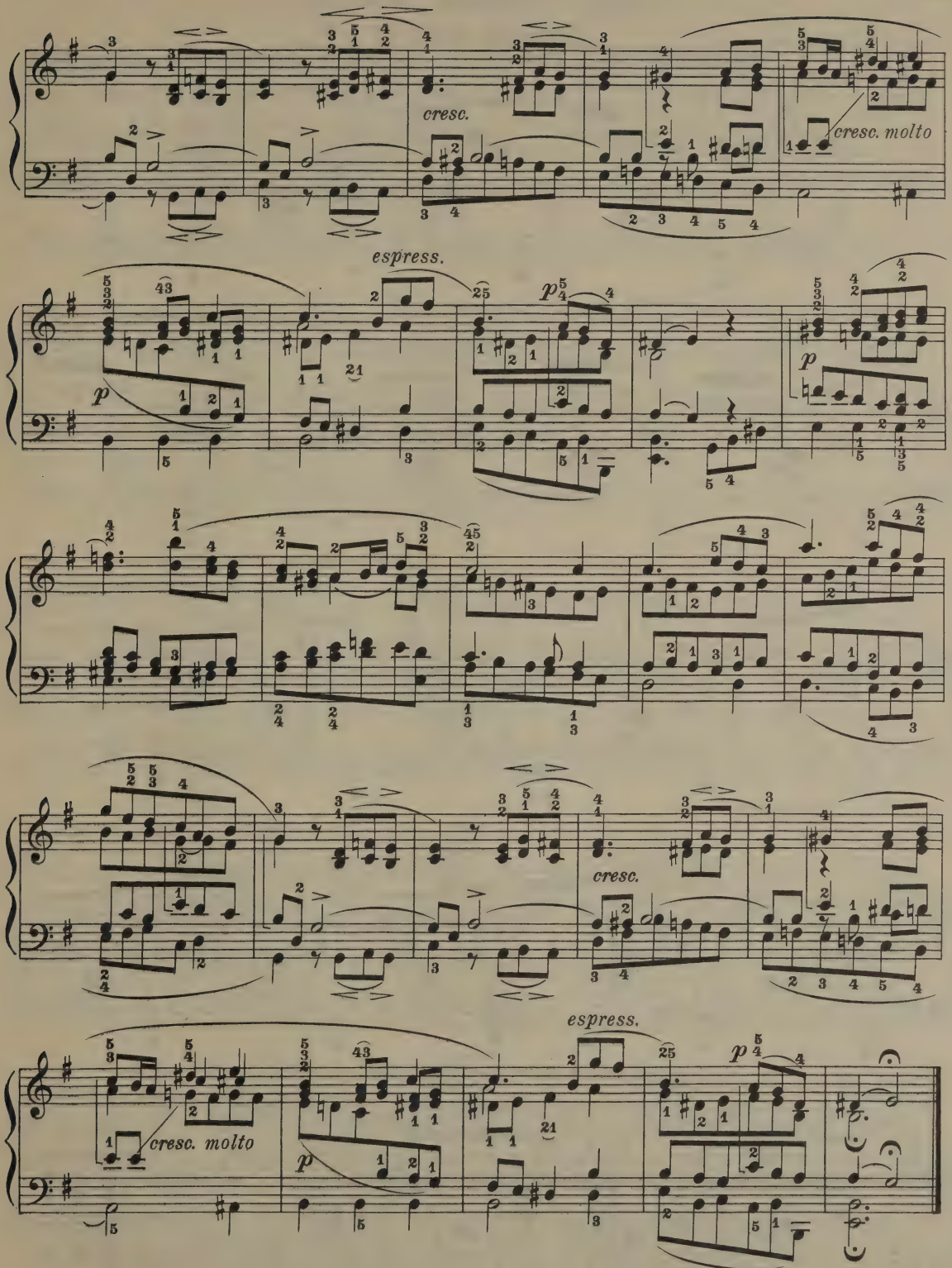

p
Ped. simile
sf
sf
dimin.
p
mf
dimin.
pp
pp r. h.

Characteristic Piece

(With Longing)

Op. 7, No. 6

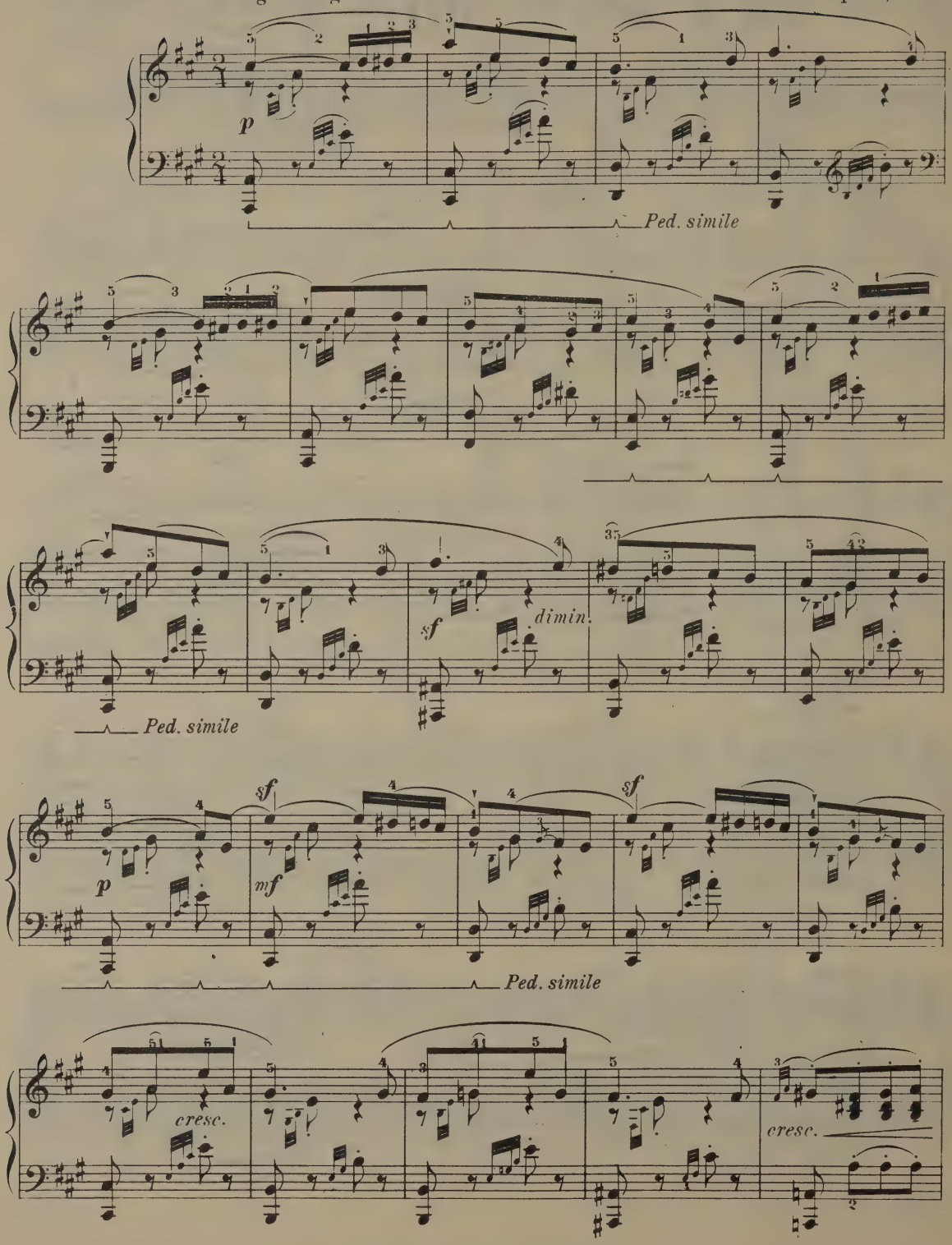



cresc.
cresc. molto
espress.
p
espress.
cresc.
cresc. molto

Song Without Words

(Spring Song)

Allegretto grazioso (♩ = 88) Op. 62, No. 6



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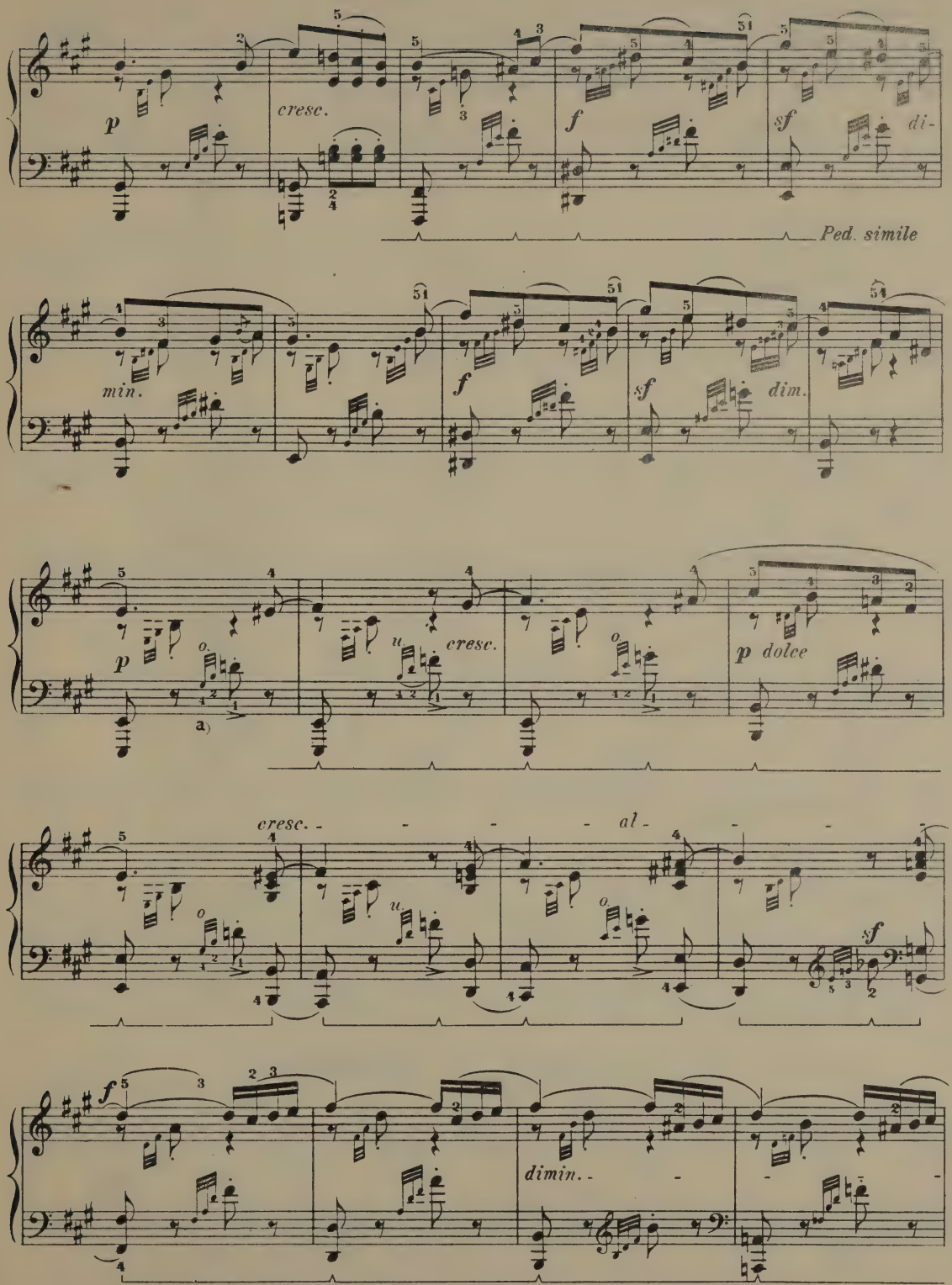
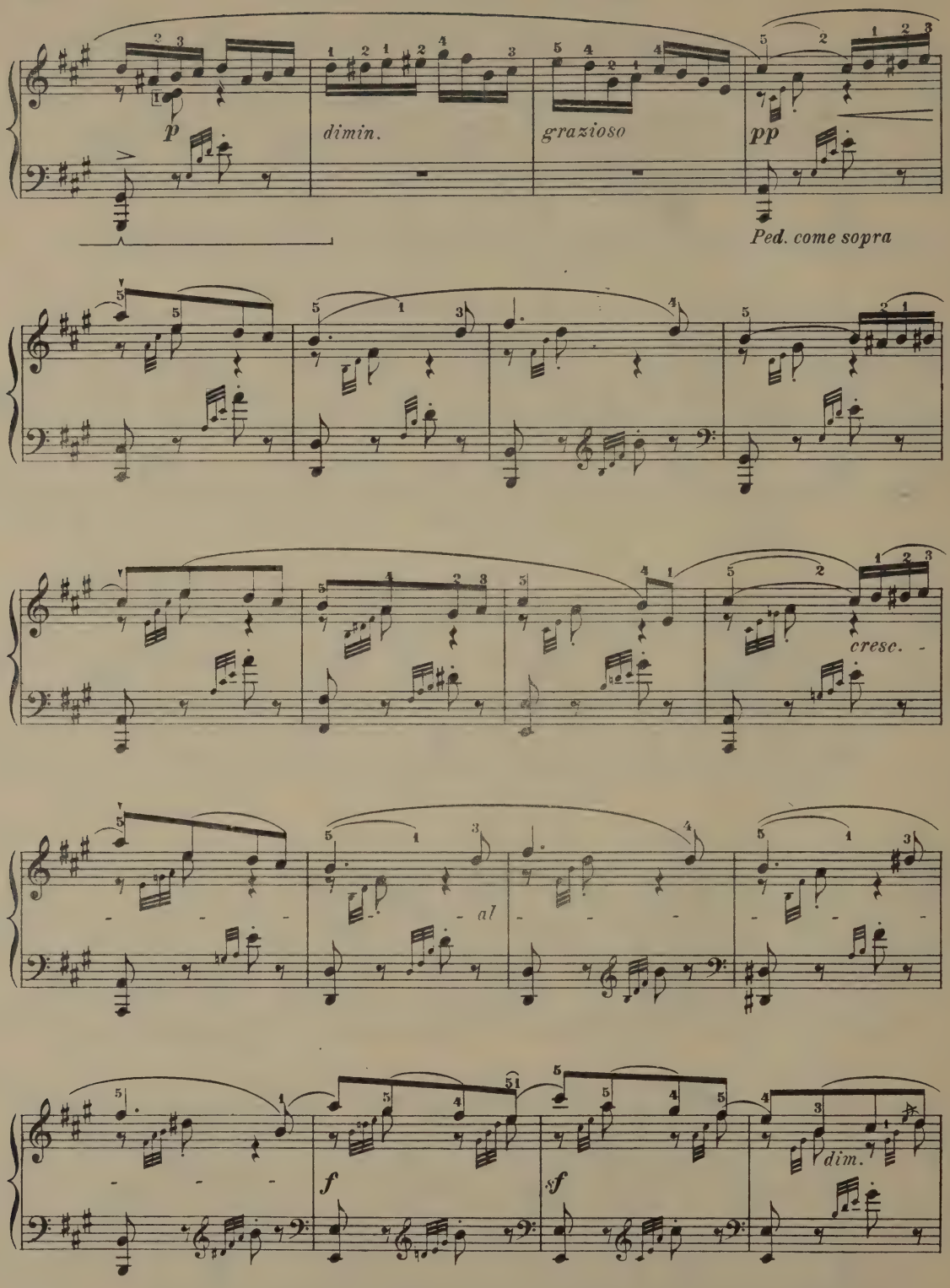
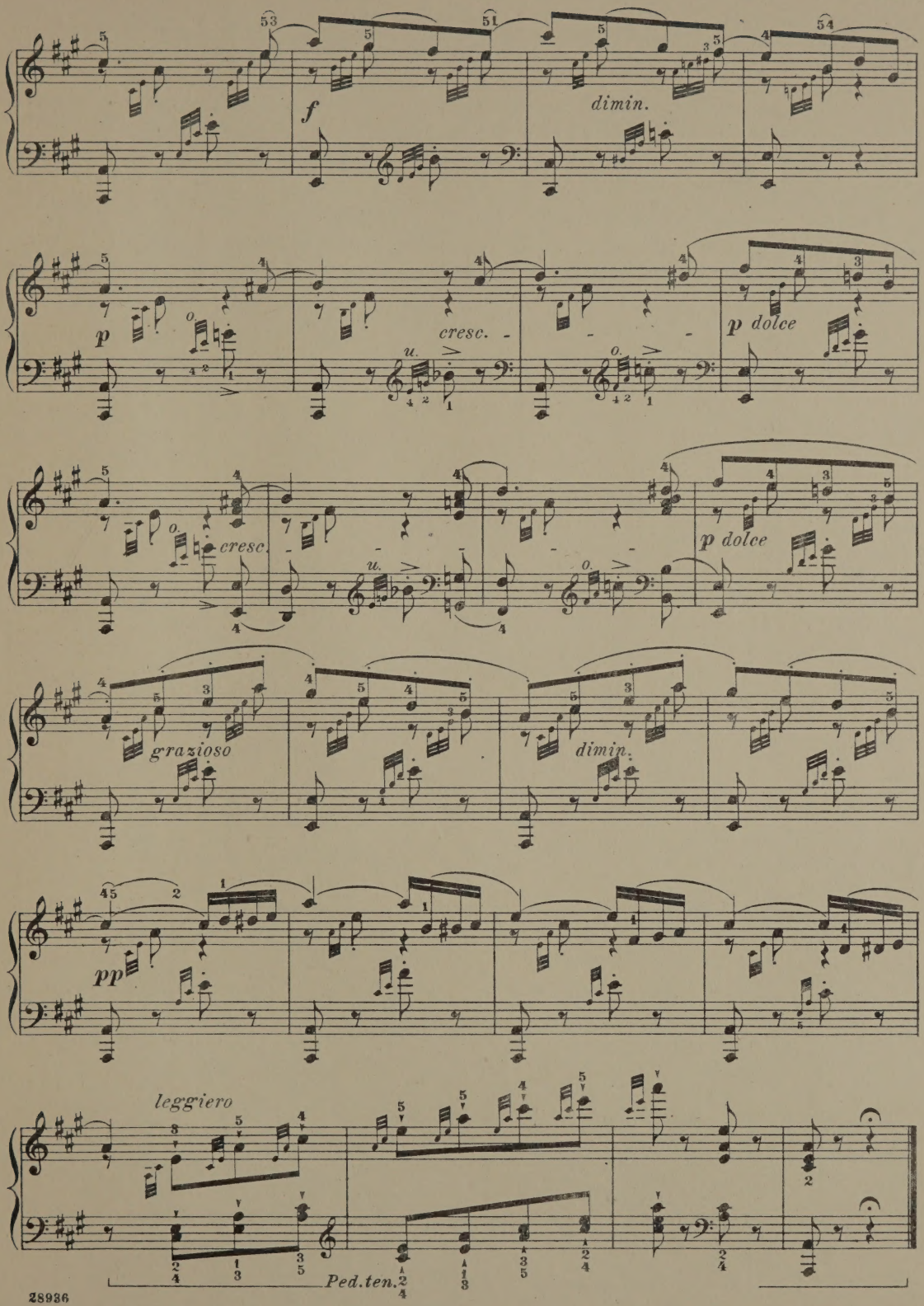


a) The letters *o.* and *u.* indicate where the left hand is best placed over *(o.)* and under *(u.)* the right.


p
dimin.
grazioso
pp
Ped. come sopra
cresc.
al
f
sf
dim.


f
dimin.
p
cresc.
p dolce
cresc.
p dolce
grazioso
dimin.
pp
leggiero
Ped.ten.

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